

NEW STATESMAN

Tehran: Days of Revolution

Eye-witness account

Ambassador College

JAN 4 1979



Our Forefathers fought
for our Country, so let's
fight for Our Valley.
Where is our FREEDOM?

**Electricity:
The Politics
of Power**
Godfrey Hodgson
and Martin Weitz

**Geoffrey Grigson
on the Sitwells**

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on Tony Benn**

Mr Dell and the decent interval

There was a time when a decent interval used to occur between the departure of a senior Labour figure from politics and his full assumption into the boardroom and bank-balance world of the higher Toryism. Ray Gunter and Securicor, Lord George-Brown and Courtaulds, Sir Richard Marsh and anything he could lay hands on – all these marriages took time to consummate, almost as if even the most fervent ex-socialist had to purge his original contempt for a brief spell. Fashions in defection have been changing lately, and Mr Edmund Dell has pioneered the brisk, no-nonsense style which we shall probably be seeing more of. On Friday, a senior minister and Member of Parliament for Birkenhead in the Labour interest. On Monday, a senior executive of a merchant bank and no doubt highly prized for his many insights into public business and international trade (all acquired, incidentally, at our expense).

The civil service have a sort of rule about not making it look too hasty. There is supposed to be a polite lapse between service to the public and private weals. It did not prevent, for instance, Sir William Armstrong from his effortless transition from head of the Civil Service to head of the Midland Bank (though his peerage, one assumes, was for services to us rather than them). The point of principle, such as it is, applies equally to both politicians and civil servants. It is, roughly speaking, designed to avoid conflicts of interest. 'Insider trading' is, in spite of this, rapidly becoming a form of government.

There is, however, an additional point which is less often made. If ministers know that their retirement can be sweetened in this way, is there not a temptation to follow policies which will not upset their future employers – either individually or as a class? To be fair to Mr Dell, he has been one of the more effective ministers, especially in dealing with oil companies, but the last week has seen disturbing revelations both from the old Ministry of

Power and the present Ministry of Transport. Jeremy Bray's detailed accusations, during the sanctions debate, of malpractice amongst senior officials in the Ministry of Power and of general connivance with the oil companies have yet to receive the attention they deserve. Taken with the disclosure of a projected public inquiry into heavy lorries, with pre-arranged conclusions, it suggests that some departments conduct business in an amazingly intimate way with interests they are supposed to supervise.

But then so does the Labour government in general. Mr Dell cannot be blamed for sticking to the schedule he obviously set himself when it looked as if there would be a disastrous October election. Compared to the interest and challenge of the City, continued membership of this inert Cabinet must have seemed stale indeed. It is quite in character for the Prime Minister to have summoned John Smith to high office – he has all the qualities of time-serving and placemanship which the Callaghan style demands. Consider: we have a Chief Minister who has just buried the Bingham report with the help of his faithful 'parliamentarian' lieutenant Michael Foot. We have a Chancellor who cannot bear being questioned in committee by anybody in full possession of the facts. We have a Home Secretary who signs deportation orders without a hearing and an Attorney General who persecutes dissent through obsolete laws. We have a Foreign Secretary who has made our name stink in Iran. We have an Energy Minister who lets the Prime Minister choose his associates. Not much room for a man with drive and spirit there.

Mr Dell's departure raises rather than exemplifies an issue of principle, but it also throws the state of the government into some relief. Who can blame a man for wanting some real action in the world of business? It's more rewarding than being on the non-executive board of a seedy corporate state.

Notes on Politics and Power

New BOSS monthly for blacks

A special correspondent writes: Black South Africans will face an important challenge next month, when a new monthly magazine called *Pace* will be published in Johannesburg. At first sight *Pace* will be a commercial venture, designed to compete with the old-established *Drum*; but in fact it is owned by the mysterious financier David Abramson who has now been revealed as having close links with Dr Rhoddie, the former South African information chief whose secret funds originated the current corruption scandal; and Abramson is believed to have funds of over £600,000 for his new venture. It is clear, in fact, that *Pace*, like *The Citizen*, will be a front for the South African security services, BOSS; and that the men who achieved the murder of Biko are now aiming to present themselves as the black man's friend. Will the blacks succeed in boycotting it, and will international companies play in with the new magazine? At present *Pace* is busily canvassing advertisers, including all the desirable world names like Unilever; it will be interesting to see if black opinion, inside and outside South Africa, can frustrate this new collaboration between multinationals and apartheid propaganda.

Conservative tide floods US Congress

Godfrey Hodgson writes: Most commentators have stressed the lack of change as the most striking feature of this year's American mid-term election results. Some are unable to find any meaningful pattern in them. Others emphasise a 'shift towards the centre.' It is true that many existing trends were confirmed last week. But it is also true that a 'shift towards the centre' is only perceptible on a distinctly conservative definition of what constitutes the centre.

Among the things that have not changed are the low representation in Congress of both women and blacks. After a decade of consciousness-raising, women have won a large number of State offices. But although many women in Washington last summer were wearing tee-shirts that said, 'A woman's place is in the House... and in the Senate', there are only 16 women in the House this autumn, two less than last year, and the woman elected to the Senate (replacing two women last year) is a conservative Republican, Nancy Landon Kassebaum, daughter of Roosevelt's opponent in 1936. There will be 15 blacks in the new House, the same number as in the old, but the only black in the old Senate, Edward Brooke of Massachusetts, was defeated, and will not be replaced.

One trend that has been confirmed is the sheer volatility of the House of Representatives. There will be 76 new congressmen (out of a House of 435) in January. The high probability of losing in two years' time tends to make congressmen jumpy, highly responsive to special interest group pressures, and hard for either the President or the House leadership to organise into stable coalitions behind legislation.

The consensus among commentators seems to be that the defeat of tax-cutting referendums in four of the 16 States that had them on the ballot proves that fears of a 'tax revolt' after the passing of Proposition 13 in California were exaggerated. Yet there is plenty of evidence of a tide running against liberals. Most of the 17 incumbent congressmen who were beaten, went down to strongly conservative challengers and in the Senate, liberals Haskell of Colorado, McIntyre of New Hampshire and Clark of Iowa all went down to conservatives, while a strong and relatively liberal candidate 'Pug' Ravenel, failed to beat ultra-conservative Strom Thurmond in South Carolina.

Perhaps the most disturbing implications of this unmistakable conservative tide are for the SALT

treaty and for US policy in Africa. One of the defeated liberals is Dick Clark, who as chairman of the Senate's African sub-committee has been a key figure in supporting the Administration's commitment to black equality in southern Africa. As for the SALT treaty, John White, chairman of the Democratic Party, says that a treaty will be in trouble if it offers equality to the Soviet Union.

Labour misses the European boat again

Roger Cohen writes: Socialist Europe's campaign for next June's elections to the European Parliament began with much pomp and ceremony in the Opera House at Lille on 7 November. The occasion was hosted by the French Socialist Party and took place against a backdrop showing the PS's rose-and-fist symbol rising from a map of Europe (which extended, significantly, to Spain, Portugal and Greece). A succession of leaders of Western European socialist and social democratic parties, including Francois Mitterrand, Willie Brandt, Mario Soares and Joop den Uyl, expressed their common conviction that 'Europe will be socialist or it will not exist at all'. Also present were a number of socialist mayors from European cities invited to voice the socialists' view that there should be greater autonomy for regional government; and a smattering of heavyweight cultural figures, notably Heinrich Böll and Gunter Grass, who were there to express the socialists' concern with maintaining the vitality and freedom of European culture.

Notably absent from the debates and ceremonies were any British Labour Party MPs. Indeed a brief note from David Owen expressing his apologies and his fraternal salutations was about the only event of the two-day meeting to go unapplauded. Mr Machado, the mayor of Lisbon, alluded to 'good old British insularity' and Mr Jack Lang, socialist Deputy for Nancy and organiser of the conference was heard to exclaim: 'What can you do? De Gaulle was right. It's another mentality over there. We sent out invitations but we got absolutely no response. I know that there are differences of opinion about Europe in the British Labour Party and I can understand that, but I would have thought a token presence might have been arranged. Britain is in Europe, isn't it?'

His sentiments were echoed by Mr Roland Tavittian, one of a number of members of the European Commission who had come down from Brussels: 'Europe is still another world for most of the British. When I lectured on the EEC in Northern England three years ago, I got the impression that Germany was still regarded as the land of the Nazis and France as the land of capitalists.'

A solitary British representative did in fact make it to Lille - Mr John Mills, deputy leader of Camden Council and chairman of the Labour Party Common Market Safeguards Committee. Asked what he thought of the British turn-out, Mills replied: 'It's an absolute scandal. There's enough money at Transport House to send Jenny Little and Ron

Hayward to Vancouver, but I couldn't even get any money to have my speech translated, let alone to cover my travel expenses. I got the impression that nobody in the Labour Party's International Section had ever heard of the proceedings.'

At Camden, he said, they received an invitation via Transport House, post-marked 13 October. It came originally from Pierre Mauroy, mayor of Lille, and Francois Mitterrand, and it asked for as many representatives as possible to attend from British local government and from the Labour Party. The invitation appears to have lain unnoticed on a desk at Transport House and to have been circulated late without an English translation. Said Mills: 'I'm the first to admit that the current Common Market terms are far from ideal, but I'd have thought we could have mustered more than one representative. After all, about 120 names have already been put forward as possible Labour Party candidates for the European elections.'

Destabilising Jamaican socialism

Michael Leapman writes from Kingston: Jamaican politicians have always been stronger on rhetoric than on results. Nobody was therefore too surprised when, after Michael Manley was elected Prime Minister in 1972, the socialist ideals which he articulated in such beautifully modulated tones continued to seem a long way from the reality of the Kingston slums. Yet none but his most cynical opponents could find any gratification in the way in which Manley is now being made to swallow his rhetoric in painfully large lumps by the International Monetary Fund. To qualify for a desperately needed loan of 240m. US dollars, the poor of Kingston and everyone else in Jamaica have had to endure consumer price increases of nearly 50 per cent since January. Wage increases are limited to 15 per cent and public spending is being pared to the bone. Imported staple foods such as rice and flour are in short supply.

The real lesson of this sad state of affairs is that no country whose economic health relies on outside investment can afford to take off in a leftist direction or even to talk about doing so. Tony Johnson of the Jamaican Public Sector Organisation - a free enterprise pressure group - could hardly have put it more plainly when I spoke to him. He traced the drying-up of investment to 1974, when Manley had the temerity to impose a levy on producers of bauxite which allowed Jamaica for the first time to get a decent return from its chief export. At about the same time, a member of the government used the term rapacious capitalists in a speech.

'This may not sound very much in Britain,' said Johnson. 'But he was the first leading politician to have said that in Jamaica, where capitalism had never previously been attacked, except by Marxist-Leninist and Trotskyist groups. You can only afford to shout socialist phrases if you can get money from the Soviet Union. It's not an LSE coffee-shop world. It's a man's world. Coffee shop revolutionary talk is easy and we can all write books and all that, but if you stand up in Parliament and say those things you have to consider the effect on investors.'

Pictures of Manley hugging Fidel Castro did not help and things became really bad when a spate of highly publicised violence deterred tourists for a couple of seasons. When Jamaica could no longer rate loans on the open market there was nothing for it but to call in the hard men from the IMF. Manley's hair shirt has been in place for five months now and the rhetoric has certainly cooled, but there is still no sign of investors returning. Left-wing members of the ruling People's National Party, and radicals such as Trevor Munroe of the Workers Liberation League, believe the IMF terms are part of an American-inspired plot to discredit and bring down the Manley Government. There has been

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plenty of talk about CIA involvement, especially in the context of a current public investigation into the mysterious activities of Albert Robinson, a puzzling figure who enjoyed the confidence of the Government a couple of years ago.



A Star is forlorn

Anna Coote writes: 'THANKS A MILLION FOLKS! You're the greatest. The *Star* is only a week old and yet we sold an average of more than a million a day... You're on to a winner with the 6p *Star*, Britain's fastest growing newspaper.' It looked like a success story last Friday (10 November) when these words appeared on the front page of the 'Rising Star'. But the success was only skin deep. Sales records had another tale to tell. On the previous Tuesday (7 November), returns from a print order of 1 million were around 43 per cent.

The circulation figure quoted on the advertising rate card was still 1.25 million at the beginning of this week. But according to one ad agency, the *Star* rep wavered when they questioned him closely on the matter, and began to talk in terms of 900,000. Others who have monitored the *Star*'s fortunes estimate that daily sales are now around 600,000.

Free speech

The return of Mrs G.

Racist condescension takes many forms in our culture, and probably its most disagreeable version is the one which claims to be for the victim's own good. The Indian 'emergency' (to borrow the terms of its author for a moment) provided a good case in point. 'Old Indian hands' from the Tory benches combined with some decomposing figures from the Labour side to maintain that what your Indian really wanted was a good dose of firm government and less talk about vague political liberties ('you can't eat ballot papers old man'). More offensive still was the pseudo-socialism of those who argued that a hungry man would put his stomach first – almost as if the removal of his right to free speech was the equivalent of an extra handful of rice. This came especially hard from the 'socialists' in this country who count the day

Disclosures from Beecham?

Christopher Hird writes: An important milestone in the development of industrial relations was reached this month when the Central Arbitration Committee started hearing a complaint from ASTMS that the drug company Beecham Pharmaceuticals refused to disclose information which the union needs. This is the first really detailed claim, covering balance sheet and profit information and future plans, which has been lodged under the Employment Protection Act.

The Act requires companies to disclose information asked for by recognised trades unions, provided that the information is relevant and that without it the union would be 'impeded to a material extent in bargaining'. There are several reasons which employers can quote in refusing to provide information, the most useful of which is the claim that disclosure would substantially injure their business. Beecham's initial response to the ASTMS claim, this spring, made use of these arguments in a characteristically robust way:

In general we consider that the document largely consists of superficial statements or irrelevant requests and reflects a lack of understanding of business operations. You should appreciate that the suggested disclosure of highly sensitive commercial information would be advantageous to competitors and as a consequence, detrimental to the security of employment of the staff.

ASTMS's argument has been that it needs the information to judge Beecham's ability to pay wage increases and the effect of future plans on the security of employment of its members.

As Beecham Pharmaceuticals UK is a division – rather than a limited company – without Beecham Group Ltd, a lot of information about profits that might otherwise be disclosed is not. ASTMS are clearly hoping that the CAC will extend their decision, made this August, in the case between Courtaulds and two of its unions. In recommending that the company disclose details of the size of the total pay bill in its Spennymoor factory the CAC said:

It is an item which is normally freely available from the published accounts, but it is not so when the company is part of a larger group.

At this month's hearing Beecham only got so far as making out its case that the information was not relevant; the hearing should finish at its next session in December. Many companies are waiting keenly for the outcome and Beecham are taking it all very seriously: unusually, their case is being presented by counsel.

ill-spent in which they have not lectured their former friends on the virtues of wage restraint. Materialism is a one-way street for some of our 'elder statesmen'.

In this respect, the sight of Michael Foot drinking a daily gallon of his own urine was especially displeasing. In October 1976, with the leader of the Indian Socialist Party undergoing torture in Mrs Gandhi's prison system, and our own correspondent K. R. Sundar Rajan in gaol without trial, we wrote to Foot and asked him to speak privately on K. R.'s behalf during his private visit to New Delhi.

It was barely two weeks before we received a reply from one of his underlings. It read, and I quote:

Most people would be very surprised to hear that while you were castigating him in public, you were asking him in private to take up a case *on your behalf* (my italics); I hope you will not say anything in the paper about his representations since it would only do further damage to the people you are trying to help. Michael suggests that if in future you want to make private approaches to him in any matter, it would be better if you had apologised first in public for your public insults.

Note the untidy three-fold smear – first that we hoped to do ourselves a bit of good by taking

Dicks the immigrant dumper

Francis Wheen writes: Terry Dicks, chairman of Tory-controlled Hillingdon Council, has spent the past week complaining about the intolerable burdens placed on him by certain homeless immigrants who arrive at Heathrow airport. In fact, his obligations are remarkably light. All he has to do is provide temporary shelter for the homeless under the terms of the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act. When Labour controlled the council, they also had responsibility for finding permanent accommodation for homeless immigrants. They asked the GLC, with its greater resources, to take over the task, but the GLC (already controlled by the Tories) said no. Only after the Conservatives took over Hillingdon in May this year did the GLC accede to the request. Mr Dicks works as an assistant to GLC leader Horace Cutler and he was previously an aide of GLC housing chairman George Tremlett. The GLC's change of heart was doubtless negotiated in a satisfyingly cosy atmosphere.

Extending the Lucas workers' initiative

Patrick Wintour writes: This Saturday at a conference called Alternatives to Unemployment over 400 shop stewards and academics will be discussing the likelihood of massive microprocessor-induced structural unemployment in Britain. They will examine how combine committees and community groups can construct the alternative job opportunities which the international market is unable to provide. Organised by the Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems, a unique amalgam of academics and shop stewards, the conference will be examining ways in which the concept of the Lucas alternative corporate plan (a workers' plan to diversify out of declining arms industry into socially useful products) can be extended throughout British industry. The Lucas initiative has already been taken up by other combines, some of whom are producing specific company plans while others such as the Chrysler combine, in conjunction with the Conference of Socialist Economists, are developing a general critique of their industry. Thirty papers have been written specifically for the conference, debating the concept of socially useful goods, the inadequacy of socialism in one company and the need to fight simultaneously at a local and national level for alternative forms of work. The example of Lucas still inspires.

up the case of an embattled and persecuted correspondent; second that any mention of Foot's interest in the case (negligible) would damage the man; third that our criticism of his political stand on the 'emergency' was a matter for *public* apology. As it happens, we had reported a speech of his to the Cambridge University Fabian Society; a speech which had shocked its audience by callous indifference to civil liberties. Foot did not forgive, and had not forgotten, our stand on this occasion. And, ever unwilling to learn from events, he has been prominent among those who urge an official welcome for the wretched Mrs Gandhi in her current tour of the UK.

There is little more to be said about Foot (though something more to be done) except that he exemplifies the double standard – otherwise well personified by Dr Owen over Iran – which holds that we can ask for less in the case of black and brown peoples than we would for ourselves. His veiled threat – delivered by proxy – in the middle sentence of that extract also speaks for itself. The Indian voters, of course, chucked out Mrs G. the first chance they got.

Christopher Hitchens

Oilgate notebook

Nine wise monkeys

■ Last week's debate still hasn't really solved the 'who knew what' mystery. Sir Harold Wilson kicked off the proceedings by pointing out that since UDI there had been three prime ministers, five foreign secretaries, and nine energy ministers – and 'he was certain that none of these knew.' So what was the score? First – the three prime ministers. Wilson and Heath pleaded ignorance. Callaghan remained silent. Secondly – the five foreign secretaries (actually I count six). Michael Stewart admitted he learned of the 'swap' in 1969. Lord George-Brown and Lord Home managed to make their contributions to the debate without actually saying whether or not they had known. Callaghan remained silent. Anthony Crosland is dead. Dr Owen said it was not until last year that he began to get news of Shell and BP's Rhodesian involvement. Thirdly – the nine energy ministers. As most of them don't seem to have participated in the debate, more research is

needed to discover what they knew.

Adding up the scores gives Wilson an overall victory. What is most worrying, however, is that those who admitted they didn't know appeared not to really care. Yet basic knowledge on sanctions might have made it easier to formulate our Rhodesian policy over the past thirteen years. During the parliamentary debates it was also noticeable that most of the foreign secretaries spoke out against a further inquiry. Perhaps we need a new team?

Join BP and see the world

■ BP has just been advertising in the national press for more secretaries. It states that the first advantage of working with BP is 'interest' because 'the oil industry is always in the news'. Many BP staff would agree. One executive in the Corporate Planning Department described the post-Bingham atmosphere there as being akin to the last days of the Nixon White House.

Have you ever wished?

■ Nearly a month ago *The Times* ran some large advertisements with a headline asking 'Who's better informed about Rhodesia's oil than Ian Smith?' The answer, as you guessed,

was Tiny Rowland. Readers were then promised a series of exclusive revelations in *The Times*. Nothing has actually appeared. What have we missed? Has Rowland's pursuit of the oil companies slowed down with the dropping of possible sanctions-busting charges against Lonrho?

Slow motion

■ Dr Owen told parliament that he had sent copies of correspondence between the Government and the oil companies to the DPP. Unfortunately, however, the press didn't really appreciate the significance of this rather oblique reference. Referral to the DPP suggests that the recent 'swap' with Sasol could have contravened the Sanctions Order – on the grounds that the head offices of Shell and BP were conniving at the arrangement. Back in July the oil companies had the privilege of receiving a draft copy of the Bingham Report which contained full details of the 'swap'. Yet it was not until two months later, after *The Sunday Times* expose, that BP ended its formal links with Rhodesia. Shell, incidentally, has not yet revealed whether it has taken similar action.

Martin Bailey

Francis Wheen: New light on the civil service's dark secrets

'Why should I dislike a coloured person?' says an anonymous civil servant. 'It's like saying I dislike someone because they have a large nose or crossed eyes.' The remark, quoted in the report of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (*Application of Race Relations Policy in the Civil Service*, HMSO £5), is fairly representative of the racist twaddle spouted by white civil servants to the Institute's researchers. Might one conclude, then, that race relations in the civil service are not, perhaps, all they should be? Not at all. 'This report is to our credit,' said one civil service press officer last week. But don't some of the figures in the report suggest that discrimination is rife in the civil service? 'How can there be discrimination? We have a policy against it.'

The insouciant ease with which the civil service has got itself off the hook shows up the report's weaknesses. The Tavistock Institute was commissioned by the Civil Service Department to examine procedures in recruitment, posting, training and promotion in various civil service establishments to see if there was any way in which they could operate to the disadvantage of racial minorities, but some of the research seems remarkably thin. At HM Dockyard, Portsmouth, for example, the Institute's researchers 'did not meet any coloured or other minority members of the staff. Race relations were invariably referred to as harmonious and people said that this had been so for many years.' Well they would, wouldn't they? Yet the researchers allowed themselves to be persuaded that it was sufficient for the purposes of their investigation to speak only to 'officials' of management and unions (all white), even though their research elsewhere had already shown

that white people are not always great authorities on racial matters. At the DHSS, for instance, white civil servants told the researchers that 'some coloured officers are lazy and a good number aren't clean although they may look it' and that 'I've found that most coloured people pick your brains and give nothing in return. They seem secretive and some are grasping.'

The Institute was not specifically instructed to produce any conclusions, but in the light of the dozens of charts, graphs and sets of figures in the 275-page report, which seem to show that racial discrimination is alive and well in the civil service, it is surprising that the researchers are so hesitant to draw conclusions. After pages of racist quotes from white civil servants, the report comments: 'It would be unwise . . . to draw conclusions from them because they emerged as peripheral themes at the interviews.' Then, with customary

understatement, the report notes: 'Regarded as first findings they do however suggest that the quality of social climate between coloured and white officers at work could be improved.' Or how about this? 'It is conceivable that a proliferation of requests for e.g. "British born – British parents" for non-security or specious reasons could lead to coloured candidates getting less preferred jobs.' (My italics.)

The Institute informs us that 'some offices . . . sifted out many or all coloured applicants', but adds a cautionary note: 'These findings do not automatically suggest wrongful discrimination.' This is precisely what the figures do suggest. Although Selection Board chairmen have been particularly instructed that, when a coloured applicant is unsuccessful, they should indicate on the mark sheet the candidate's strong and weak points and the reasons for his or her rejection, the Institute discovered that in the DHSS reasons for rejection were recorded on the papers of two-thirds of apparently educationally qualified white candidates but only one third of apparently educationally qualified coloured candidates.

The suspicion that discrimination is institutionalised in the civil service is reinforced by evidence which reached the *NEW STATESMAN* last week. Civil Service General Circular GC/34 says: 'Although the service has a record of non-discrimination of which it can justly be proud, we need to remain on our guard against some of the more subtle and unconscious varieties of discrimination which may not be easily perceived. These may result from general assumptions about the capabilities, characteristics and interests of ethnic minorities which are allowed to influence the treatment of individuals or groups.' But a private company which recently sought the advice of the Training Superintendent of the Civil Service Department Typewriting Training Centre about setting up a typing school found that the practice is rather different. According to a private memo



written after the meeting, she told them: 'It is hopeless trying to recruit in the Greater London area, in which typing is coming to be regarded as the last resort of the drop-out and a high proportion of those offering their services as recruits lack both grammar and spelling – often for ethnic reasons. But the Civil Service Department gets very good quality from further afield (e.g. the Medway towns, Guildford) where . . . it still pays promising girls to commute. Even so the girls can only be recruited as a result of personal visiting and canvassing the right schools in such areas.' She didn't actually say 'we don't like employing blacks when we can get nice county girls from the right schools instead', but the general tone of the memo

suggests that the Department's approach is not far from that.

Despite the protestations and non-sequiturs of press officers, discrimination will continue to flourish until the civil service knuckles down to an effective monitoring policy. E. J. B. Rose wrote in his seminal work *Colour and Citizenship*, as long ago as 1969:

It is an essential for a non-discriminatory employment policy that records be kept which distinguish employees by ethnic origin at all levels of employment. Some employers have argued that to differentiate by colour or racial origin is in itself discriminatory, but there is no other way to determine whether minorities are being accorded equal employment opportunities or

to gauge whether progress is being made over time.

Margaret Stewart echoed this point more succinctly in her book *Employment of Minorities in Britain: An Employer's Guide*: 'The acquisition of basic facts must be essential to the fulfilment of a policy of equal opportunity.' Yet civil servants are still trotting out the old, discredited arguments about record-keeping being 'ethically wrong' even though, as Tavistock shows, most black people support the idea of recording minority group membership. As long as the civil service continues to believe that words alone constitute an effective race relations policy, the suspicion will remain that it knows it has something to hide.

Ross Terrill: America and China: soon the twain shall meet

There are signs that America could grant diplomatic recognition to China next year. Until now a major stumbling block has been Taiwan: the Americans do not want the island to be subjected to a sudden drastic change and want to continue trade and cultural links with it; the People's Republic of China, on the other hand, wants to be clearly recognised as the sole government of China. But it now appears that Peking has gone further than ever before in signalling that the 'liberation' of Taiwan is not a task for the immediate future. On a recent visit to China I spoke to several officials, including Wang Hai-jung, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, and it seems that America could get an even better deal than the Japanese, who have enjoyed unofficial ties with Taiwan at the same time as their economic and political relationships have flourished with Peking.

US-China relations have recently taken on a new life at an informal level: trade has risen and student exchanges have been arranged. In China I met people who expect diplomatic recognition within the next six months. One journalist whom I met in Peking said 'I may see you in Washington', explaining he was 'one of three candidates' who had been chosen to be the first Chinese newsmen stationed in the American capital after normalisation.

Progress towards normal diplomatic relations is possible for three reasons. First, China is at present in an extremely outgoing mood towards the West and has adopted a foreign policy that parallels America's to a striking degree. Second, economic development of their vast country is the top priority for today's Chinese leaders. Thirdly, China's entire Asia policy would collapse if the present mood were reversed and Peking tried to take Taiwan by force.

America's problem in recognising the PRC is that it would have to abandon its 1954 defence treaty with Taiwan and withdraw its troops from the island, leaving it open to 'liberation' by the mainland Chinese. But it is now my understanding that the

PRC may be willing to allow an official American visit to Taiwan immediately after normalising relations with Peking. Such a visit would demonstrate that normalisation had had no immediate effect on Taiwan's separate status.

As recently as September 1977 senior US officials were sceptical about Peking reacting with equanimity to an official visit to an island which, by then, would have been recognised as a part of the PRC: both the communist and nationalist Chinese agree that the island is a component part of China proper. But now, I understand, such a visit, on the way home from Peking after normalisation, would be regarded by the Chinese as a trip to a Chinese province – rather like President Nixon's visit to Shanghai after his 1972 Peking talks. The Americans, of course, could take a different view and regard the visit as an act of separate US diplomacy.

Although the Peking government would only approve a courtesy trip, not one aimed at settling business with the Taiwan government, the significance of PRC's new flexibility should not be underestimated. In Taiwan it would dramatise the normalcy of the situation in the wake of diplomatic relations with Peking. In America it would reassure people that the island was not going to fall beneath the sea just because Peking has been recognised as the government of China. Even more important, it implies that the Chinese communists separate normalisation from 'liberation'. It is also clear that Peking is prepared to consider the US as a special case: some countries which have recognised Peking have subsequently stopped sending officials to Taiwan and some have even prohibited their officials from going there on holiday.

This sign of flexibility comes on the heels of two others. Peking has allowed its scientists to sit down at an international congress in Tokyo attended also by representatives from Taiwan; and it has established diplomatic relations with Libya without requiring Libya to announce an end to its official links with Taiwan.

It has long been clear that ceasing to recognise Taiwan as the government of China will not end American trade with the island – no less than eight of Taiwan's ten top trading partners are countries which have already recognised the PRC – and that the flow of people and ideas between America and Taiwan could continue as long as the island remained a separate territory. It has also been clear that, security treaty or not, the US could always spring back with military force if it thought Peking's behaviour threatened the peace and health of the East Asian region. Now it appears that Peking has gone even further in signalling that 'liberation' of Taiwan is not a task for the immediate future by indicating that US officials could visit Taiwan after normalisation.

It does not seem a bad deal for the US to give up a shadow (recognition of Taiwan as the government of China) if it can hold on to the substance (continuing links with an island that in theory would be acknowledged to be a province of the PRC). An American leader who visited both Peking and Taiwan in a single week would be able to claim a significant political victory.

Ross Terrill is associate professor of government at Harvard University. He is the author of *The Future of China* and has just returned from his fifth visit to China.

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This month's demonstrations in Tehran have united a cross-section of Iranian society against the Shah. **David Thomas** was there.

Tehran's Days of Revolution

On the day after the burning of much of Tehran and the greatest popular uprising against the Shah's authority the city has seen, when the ogre of total anarchy aroused by the fraternisation of individual soldiers had sent the telephones buzzing with panicking expatriates, I suggested to a well-connected Iranian liberal that the only alternative to bedlam was military government. 'Impossible,' he said. 'The People would never accept it now. Freedom has gone too far. It would mean civil war.' Twenty minutes later the radio announced that a military government had been formed and that instructions to soldiers to carry out the martial law interdiction by firing on groups of two or more after a warning shot would be carried out 'to the letter'.

Although the uprising in Tehran was the climax of the revolution, the provincial cities had their turn long ago. The pretty girls of Shiraz barely notice the army trucks standing at street corners, gunners pointing their machine guns down the pavements or towards the mosque in Falaki Square where the imam is denouncing the regime. But with a sudden flurry outside a shoe-shop we're running for cover as six soldiers point their bayonets down the pavement. The students who provoked them have scattered and within seconds we are wandering amid chattering housewives through the guns. Marxist texts, unthinkable until recently, litter the sidewalks. Amid them is the photograph of a middle-aged man. 'It's Dr Shariati,' a student told me. 'The Shah killed him,' he added with hatred.

Although the picture throughout the country had for weeks been one of anarchy, the impressive restraint of the Tehran mobs from killing individuals, let alone foreigners, on 5 November suggests that most targets had been meticulously selected. Banks in Tehran were telephoned shortly before they were razed. No-one was killed in a cinema. The staff of the British Embassy was politely ushered out before the front office was burnt. Standing amid some 200,000 demonstrators in Shahreza Avenue on that Sunday, I found no hint of violence was ever aimed at me. On the contrary, students begged me to come and report on what they were doing and to witness that their goal was the end of tyranny.

Our exit from Shiraz was chaotic. Most flights were cancelled due to strikes and the airport was filled with Americans evacuating from the oil towns of the South. However, the few stories of atrocities were based on rumour. A very frightened American had seen a poster on which was written: 'What shall we give the Shah for his birthday - 20 dead Americans.' But we were deceived in our belief that, by approaching Tehran, we were entering a tempest. The capital was quiet and the military was in much lower key than in Shiraz. But when I asked the reception manager at my hotel what the



situation was, he leaned forward quietly and said; 'There is going to be terrible violence. This will be a second Beirut.' The television was showing the now regular sittings of the majlis (Parliament). The then Prime Minister Sharif Emami was speaking at length on the Government's determination to root out corruption. The hotel staff roared with laughter. When the Deputy from Karaj, Akhbari, embarked on a two-hour speech in which he denounced several ministers for amassing and exporting huge sums of money, they laughed even louder. 'But isn't this democracy?' I asked. 'It's just amphitheatre,' one replied, 'they just talk and talk.' Another maintained that these inordinate speeches had been 'set up' so that the Prime Minister would not have to answer 142 'sensitive' questions. It seemed clear to me that from henceforth no Government that contained a single Deputy who had held any position over the last 25 years (since the collapse of the democratic National Front Government of Dr Mousadeq) could ever win popular support.

When I telephoned friends opposite the University in Shahreza Avenue on the Saturday morning they told me not to approach because three soldiers had committed suicide outside the shop rather than fire on the crowd. By the end of the morning five students had been reported killed on the campus and 60 others were believed killed in the surrounding side streets where they had been setting fire to cars and trucks. The suicides and many of the other stories I heard could not be corroborated but rumour, abuzz today in Tehran, lies at the heart of revolution. The fact that only 'hard fact' is reported in the West gives a weak picture of the realities of Iran today. It is, for example, now widely accepted in Tehran that at least 3,000 people were killed when the army opened fire on the peaceful demonstrators in South Tehran's Jaleh Square on 8 September. A European teacher whose flat dominated the square claimed that he had seen bodies carted off in army trucks for several days from the sealed-off square. The most widely held story is that the crowds

fled into the Kourush Department Store which a Chieftain tank blasted apart with a shell. Tahrans from all walks of life also assured me that Israeli soldiers had on this, as on other occasions, been brought in to fire on the crowds to obviate the danger of mutiny by unwilling Iranian conscripts. Evidence for this belief is scant and it may merely represent the unwillingness of most Iranians to believe that their own soldiers would fire on their brothers.

The Shah's reliance today on army support is unsafe and over the past few weeks there have been many individual instances of mutiny. At Shiraz Airport and from my window in Tehran I watched troop carriers taking off and landing every few minutes. This is part of the policy of keeping the army on the move and sending soldiers far from their native regions. But whether the policy of sending Turkish-speaking soldiers from Azerbaijan, say, to Tehran and Shirazi soldiers to Mashad can continue to succeed is a moot point. It may not forever prevent the kind of fraternisation that I witnessed in Shahreza Avenue on 5 November.

The morning of Sunday, 5 November was a quiet, crisp winter morning. It would have been impossible to foresee the explosion that was now to rock the city and with it the Pahlavi dynasty. Walking down Takhte Jamshid towards the University we passed the windowless Golden Palace Cinema and then the burnt-out hulk of the Bank Saderat. Throughout the streets broken glass had already been swept into neat piles. At the Anatole France intersection which borders the University, eight cars and a lorry lay smouldering and gleaming. Within the campus loudspeakers carried the voices of professors denouncing the regime to applause by several thousand students. The day had not yet begun. When I reached Shahreza, for months the meeting-point of students from several campuses and the huge crowds of have-nots that move up from the bazaar area in South Tehran, the traffic that only disappears when firing actually breaks out was edging through thick crowds. For those who knew Tehran up to four months ago,

The image of a religious revolution call-

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ing for reactionary Islamic Government that will bind women to their homes, institute capital punishments associated with Saudi Arabia and ban alcohol has been gleaned in the West from the pronouncements of Khomeini. When a truly democratic Government is established in Iran religion will indeed have to be respected but Khomeini's 'Islamic Government' is interpreted in very broad terms and most of the demonstra-

tors in Iran today see it merely as a moral seal on 'just' governance. A student shouting for Khomeini told me: 'Personally I don't believe in God but I believe in Khomeini and Islam is the root of our culture while the Imperial traditions of the Pahlavis are foreign to us.' As an asylum from the erosive and humiliating forces of the West, Islam is vital to Iran's future but the image of an autocratic Islamic Government is as

false as the Shah's feeble attempt to band the Opposition into the convenient amalgam of 'Islamic-Marxists'. Although long stifled, democracy is not new to Iran, and our own leaders, including the commercial community, would do better to back today's overwhelming movement for freedom rather than a ruler who has had to preserve his arrogant double-talk with a brutal and economically ruinous army.

Simon Walker:

New Zealand's macho politics



Robert Muldoon and Bill Rowling

Parliament the other night was quite ordinary by New Zealand standards. The Prime Minister twice accused Labour's foreign affairs spokesman, the 'father of the house', of lying to Parliament. On the second occasion he asked the speaker to rule his opponent's statements a *prima facie* breach of privilege. The Minister of Broadcasting spoke of his 'contempt' for Labour's spokesman on Maori Affairs, and his 'utmost contempt' for the junior opposition whip, whom he labelled 'ignorant and unfeeling'. The Labour Party talked of 'grubby little men' and 'this gutter Prime Minister' before accusing the government of 'dipping its hands into the ballot box' to rig the forthcoming election. The debate was on the supplementary estimates. It was in the same debate, two years ago, that Mr Muldoon accused a former Labour cabinet minister of having been 'picked up by the police for homosexual activities'.

Then, as now, attention was wholly diverted from the subject of the debate: a record-high deficit before borrowing of \$1,400 m. this year (nearly 9 per cent of CMF) by a government which came to power pledged to cut public expenditure. The distraction says much about the political scene here in the run-up to the general election on 25 November. Whoever wins the election, the deficit will continue to grow; so will unemployment which each month reaches a new post-depression record. Neither issue weighs particularly heavily, except with those most directly affected. There has been a major change in New Zealand politics over the past few years. All the indications are that New Zealanders prefer the strident and aggressive style of Mr Muldoon's National Party.

In the 1975 election National ran a populist campaign, offering 'New Zealand the way you want it'. The party sought out scapegoats - immigrants, 'bludgers', and 'stirrers' - for social and economic problems.

Immigrants were a key concern. Under Labour net immigration totalled 30,000 a year.

The promise to curb immigration has been so spectacularly effected that the problem now alarming some employers' groups and economists is a mass exodus of people, (many of them skilled workers and professionals).

New Zealand now has a net emigration tally of 30,000. That is one percent of its

population of 3.2 million - most of them immigrants or the children of immigrants. With an area greater than the U.K., the country could certainly stand more inhabitants. And indeed, the government has indicated a willingness to take in some Rhodesian refugees - if they are white. The Minister of Immigration argues the public would prefer 'their own stock'.

'Bludgers' were a second category of scapegoat, meaning those who live off the taxes of others. A fourfold increase in unemployment has led to corresponding growth in the ranks of those labelled 'bludgers'. But the most vigorously attacked target group of the past three years has been single or solo mothers living on domestic purposes benefit. The technique of shopping one's neighbour if she's a solo mum whose boyfriend stays overnight has flourished under the government's seal of approval.

A single mother won an eighteen month legal battle to reinstate her benefit, which the Department of Social Welfare cancelled when she admitted to sleeping with her boyfriend twice a week. Far from feeling embarrassed, the Department made deductions from the arrears to cover the proceeds of cake sales, run, on her behalf, by other solo parents, as well as for the eight month period she had spent in a mental hospital. The government now plans to change the law to cover 'people who structure their lives so they can qualify for a benefit'.

One group of beneficiaries not regarded as 'bludgers' are pensioners. National's superannuation scheme provides pensions fixed at 80 per cent of the average working wage. This generosity has imposed a heavy burden on taxpayers. But at the election the government can expect to eat into traditional Labour support among the aged.

'Stirrers' have not been blessed with similar electoral overtures, although they too tend to vote Labour. The term is a generic one covering trade unionists, academics and activists of various kinds who 'stir' up trouble for trouble's sake.

Such as criticising the government support for voluntary trade unionism, maintenance of sporting contacts with South Africa (a position partially reversed in the face of international pressure) and the reintroduction of government control over broadcasting. Since the trials of Orlov and Sharansky, the Prime Minister refers increasingly to 'dissidents' within New Zealand; a curious

condemnation, as the label might be worn with pride by many democrats. 'Dissidents' he explains are those who disagree with him or his government.

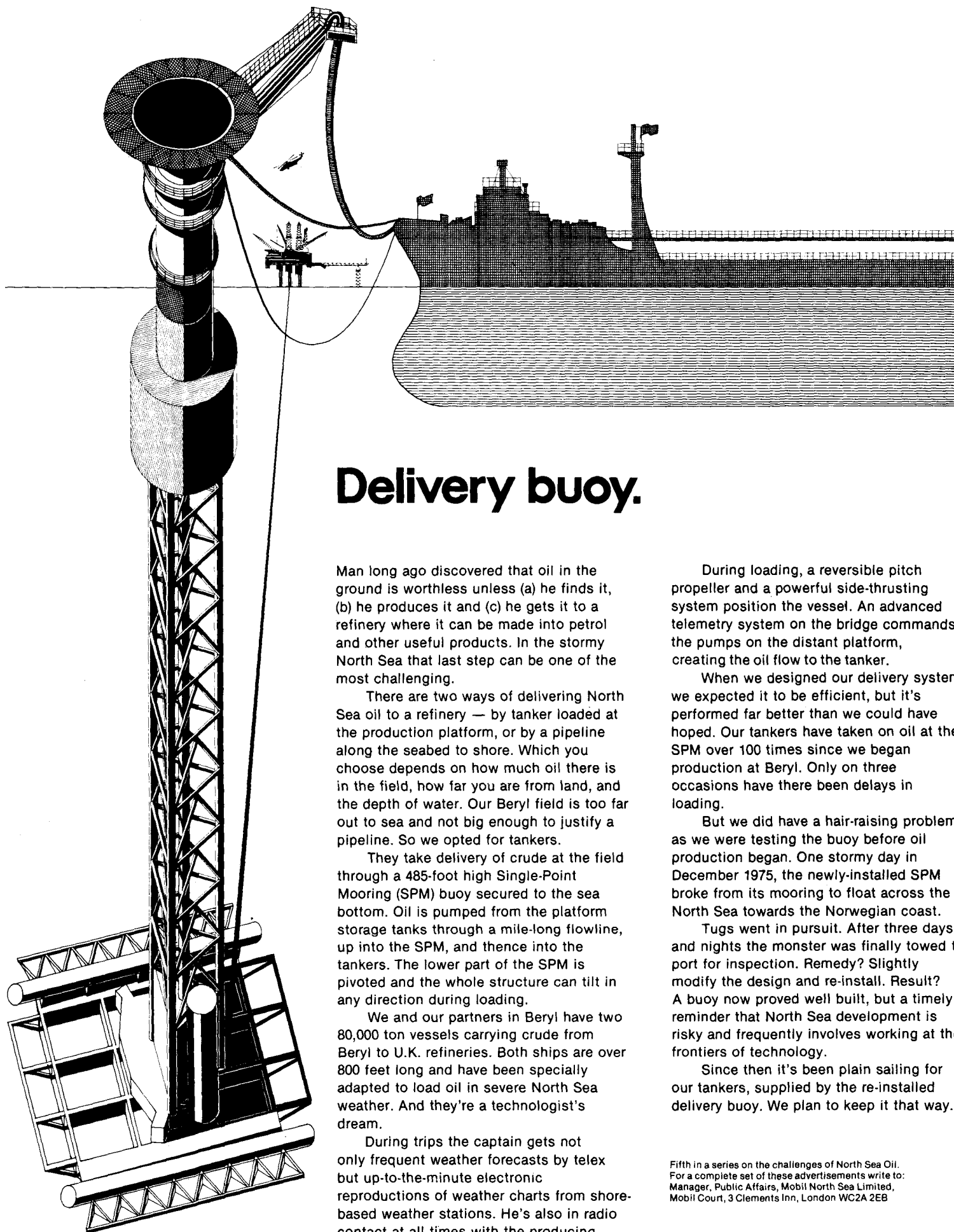
It is costly to be a dissident. Mr Muldoon claimed to have cost the chairman of 'Halt All Racist Tours' his job at the United Nations by talking to the President of the General Assembly. The editor of the *Christchurch Star* was obliged to resign (although subsequently reinstated at his staff's insistence) after running a series of anti-Muldoon editorials.

Last year the Security Intelligence Service gained the right to tap phones and plant listening devices, on the warrant of the Prime Minister. This year the police gained the right to tap phones in drug cases. Last month the exiled leader of the East Timor independence movement was invited to New Zealand by various groups, including the Labour Party. The government refused him a visa unless he undertook not to make public statements, or to speak to the news media. The government will not allow visitors to speak publicly if they seek removal of the government of a 'friendly power'. Refugee students from South Africa are not allowed to make public statements under a similar provision. A Fijian student was deported, evidently on 'academic grounds', when he was elected vice-president of the University Students' Association.

Despite Labour Party criticism, there is little evidence that these policies have damaged the government. The public knew what it was getting in 1975 - a tough leader of a tough government. Except on the economic front, it is 'New Zealand the way you want it'.

The economic front seems to matter less and less. What battle there is, is over tax cuts: both parties have promised reductions. But economic promises are treated with scepticism.

The election of 25 November will be fought over matters of political style. New Zealand has become a tougher community since 1975. The present level of unemployment might have brought down any other government. Today it is likely to cost only the votes of the unemployed. The voters respect toughness, which is not the image Labour's Bill Rowling projects. In *macho* politics, a mild-mannered schoolteacher with a degree in economics and a high-pitched voice is no match for the Mr Muldoon who has been known to punch his way through a row of demonstrators. 25 November will see an election of unparalleled bitterness between New Zealand the way we've got it and New Zealand the way it used to be. Stirrers and dissidents have been warned: look out for squalls and stormy weather.



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Power over the People

Britain

Mrs Bacon v CEGB

Martin Weitz

Over the last few weeks Gloucester's concrete leisure centre has been the incongruous setting for a debate of major national importance. The Central Electricity Generating Board wants to disfigure the landscape around the Gloucestershire village of Innsworth with their monster pylons which carry the national grid's 400,000 volts. But at the public inquiry they are fighting for all they are worth against the argument that the electric and magnetic fields beneath the lines are a public health hazard.

The major opposition to the CEGB has come from an old untiring opponent of theirs, the highly articulate Mrs Hilary Bacon. Virtually singlehanded, Mrs Bacon has managed to obtain, to the intense irritation of the CEGB, much radio, TV and newspaper publicity for her claims that overhead power lines near her home in Fishpond, Dorset, are causing chronic headaches, stress and a whole cluster of ills such as giddiness, disorientation and depression. She is not alone: other residents of Fishpond who live close to the power lines also have complained of such symptoms. For the last five years CEGB officials have been trying unsuccessfully to shut Mrs Bacon up and to convince her that their lines are not the cause of her health problems. But Mrs Bacon has managed to find scientific evidence from Russia and the United States to back up her claims about the hazards of electromagnetic fields; she has confounded CEGB officials with her knowledge and grasp of the subject. 'I don't wish to be offensive, Mrs Bacon, but why didn't you report these symptoms for over four years?' asked the plodding, but mildly corrosive counsel for the CEGB, Mr Christopher Whybrow. He was trying to convince the Inspectors that Mrs Bacon was a neurotic nutcase whose illnesses were self made and not the product of electrical pollution, but Mrs Bacon remained a rational and credible witness throughout her gruelling cross examination. By contrast the CEGB's supposedly star witness, Dr John Bonnell, deputy nuclear health and safety officer of the CEGB, was quickly reduced in stature by Mr Patrick Clarkson, counsel for the objectors. He demonstrated that Dr Bonnell had been somewhat selective in his choice of evidence; he tended to mention only scientific literature which supported the CEGB's case. 'Anything that is contrary to his views is dismissed as irrelevant,' complained Mr

Clarkson.

The greatest weakness in the CEGB case that health hazards do not exist is the fact that they have never actually carried out any research into possible hazards in this country. Instead, they rely on foreign research; they choose to dismiss Russian evidence that workers exposed to high voltage fields suffer 'nausea, lassitude, loss of appetite and reduced sexual drive' as being subjective and unscientific but they do accept Canadian evidence which failed to find any such ill effects.

The CEGB claims its own electricity substation workers are just as healthy as other members of its workforce. But it has never actually investigated the health of its workers; it has only compared the sickness records of workers. There have been no medical checks, before or during the course of employment, and no epidemiological surveys of distinct groups of workers exposed to electrical fields. Furthermore, the experience of workers exposed to high voltage electric fields may have no bearing on individuals who are *continuously* exposed day and night 7 days per week to levels of electrical pollution which could be between 40 and 1,000 times higher than occurs naturally.

Another flaw in the CEGB's case is its failure to have carried out any medical examinations on the population of Fishpond, although they have complained of adverse symptoms for nearly five years. A number of fairly simple medical tests over a period of time could have established if there was any pattern in their illnesses. For example Professor Felix Sulman of Jerusalem University has established from urine samples that serotonin hormone levels fluctuate among one third of the Jerusalem population in tune with the electrical charges present in the air. The US Naval Aerospace Medicine Research Lab found raised blood sugar levels and reduced mental ability among volunteers exposed to extremely low frequency radio waves emitted by a massive antenna to communicate with US Navy submarines (known as Project Sanguine/Seafarer). Since electric fields alternate at a low frequency of 50 cycles per second this kind of effect might be present in Fishpond, but no-one, least of all the CEGB, has bothered to even find out. The CEGB has only measured the electrical field at ground level in the village but, as a surprise witness showed last week, these measurements could be totally misleading. The CEGB found levels as high as 6,000 volts, sufficient to light up a fluorescent light tube when placed on the ground underneath a power line. However, as Dr David Smith, a physicist from Bangor University, explained, any object, such as a garden gate, a human being or a wheelbarrow can concentrate the electrical field, thus greatly enhancing its strength; levels as high as 120,000 volts per metre could be reached in a place like Fishpond. Russian regulations

do not permit workers to stay in a field of 25,000 volts any longer than five minutes. The Russian safety standards are derived from evidence that these fields can produce nervous and heart disorders; considering that the earth's natural field is only 130 volts per metre such restrictions do not seem at all excessive. Britain does not have any safety standard at all for this type of electrical pollution.

In what appears as a desperate bid to shore up their case, at the last minute the CEGB decided to measure the number of ions in the air around power lines. Ions are electrically charged particles which can accompany certain climatic conditions, particularly hot dry winds. For a long time they have been known to be associated with a cluster of ills such as lethargy, depression, stress and so on. Scientists like Professor Sulman in Jerusalem, Prof Albert Kreuger in California and even a British researcher Dr Leslie Hawkins, have shown how patterns of health and behaviour vary according to the levels of positive and negative ions in the air. These studies are relevant to power lines because high voltage electricity carried by the lines can produce ionisation of the surrounding air. When the CEGB discovered that Dr Hawkins was going to measure the ions around Fishpond they got worried and thought that his readings might be used against them at the inquiry. In fact there was never any intention to do so because, to make any sensible interpretation, ion measurements need to be taken over a long period of time and in varying climatic conditions. This however did not deter the CEGB borrowing an ion measuring device and spending a day taking totally meaningless measurements under power lines in Surrey and inside one of their employee's kitchens. These measurements were then presented at the inquiry as evidence that power lines do not produce unusual amounts of ionisation. Of course the CEGB has never bothered to take ion measurements in Fishpond; instead it has simply told local residents that there is nothing to worry about. But it is significant that many of the Fishpond symptoms seem similar to those ills produced by an excess of positively charged ions.

The inquiry has been adjourned until 11 December. More is at stake than the rerouting of a one mile stretch of the National Grid in Innsworth. The CEGB is entitled to be worried since if the Inquiry inspectors accept that our knowledge of electromagnetic fields is insufficient to guarantee health and safety then, at worst, it could mean that the power lines suspended over ten thousand homes in Britain will have to be shifted or buried to avoid radiation hazards, a phenomenally expensive operation.

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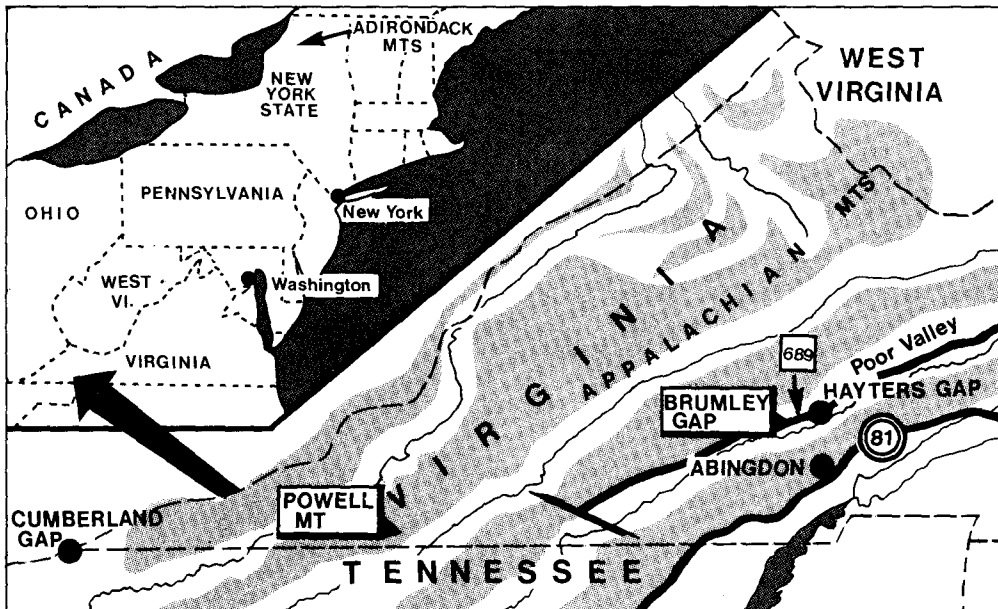
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Power over the People: America

Godfrey Hodgson: Poor Valley v. APCO



Poor Valley lies between two ridges in the far south-western corner of Virginia, deep in the Appalachian mountains, and not far short of the Cumberland Gap through which, in the late eighteenth century, the back-country settlers, led by Daniel Boone, poured westward into the Blue Grass country of Virginia.

Life has changed little in Poor Valley since Boone's time, considering that it lies within a few hours' drive both of Washington and of the industrial heartland of the Middle West. This is the poor, white, mountain South, the land of country fiddlers and pot-still whisky.

Plenty of the farmers still live in log cabins, and all of those lucky enough to hold a tobacco allotment from the government still cure their leaf in big wooden barns, bleached grey by the sun, whose design can scarcely have changed since the local men rode over the hills to fight the loyalists and their British officers at King's Mountain in 1780. In the mountain South people bury their dead in cemeteries on their own land, and many of the cemeteries in Poor Valley are more than two hundred years old. In fact, out of 119 families now living in the three-mile stretch of the valley along Brumley Creek to Hayter's Gap, 118 have lived on the same land for more than a century.

The people of Poor Valley have not abandoned their old-time religion. Indeed it brings them strength in face of a new and menacing tribulation. Every few hundred yards along Route 689 there are placards neatly handwritten in red paint on white boards.

'Romans 10: 13. For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

'Proverbs 22: 28. Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.'

'Our forefathers fought for our country. So let's fight for our valley.'

They will have to fight, because Brumley Gap is one of two alternative sites where

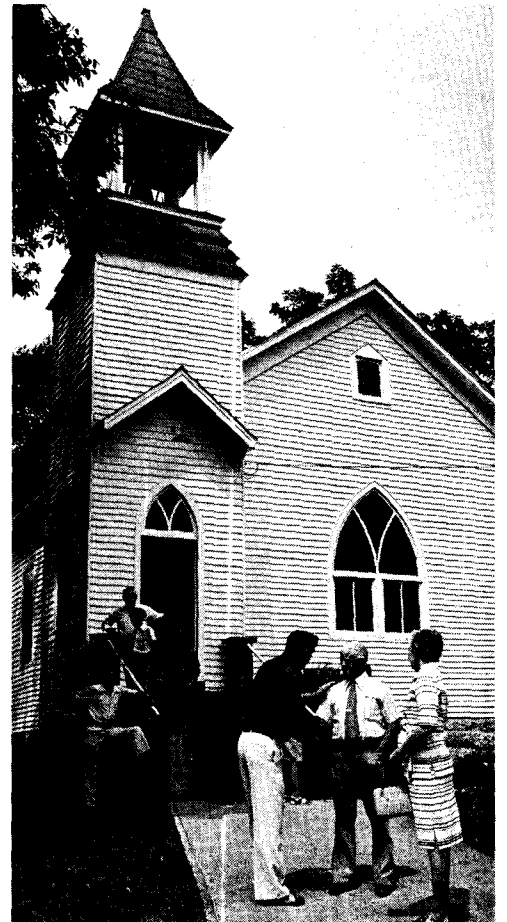
the Appalachian Power Company (APCO) has applied for permission to build a pump storage facility. The other is in even wilder country at Powell Mountain in the next county. A pump storage plant consists of two reservoirs. Water is pumped up to the upper one at off-peak periods, then allowed to flow down through generators at peak. The upper reservoir at Brumley Gap would drown 620 acres of mountainside with its wild turkeys and white-tailed deer. The lower reservoir would drown the farms, churches and cemeteries of Poor Valley. Altogether the facility would cost one billion dollars.

Appalachian Power is a subsidiary of the American Electric Power Company, a giant privately-owned system that generates and distributes power from coal-fired, oil-fired, hydroelectric and nuclear plants in seven States.

At long last, in short, the needs, interests and ambitions of industrial America have arrived on the doorstep of Poor Valley.

Which is why, improbably, this remote and tranquil vestige of eighteenth-century America is not a bad starting-point for a look at the politics of energy in late twentieth-century America. That will be a society where there will be, for the foreseeable future, an overall shortage of energy: the United States, which was self-sufficient in energy until 1970, now imports close to half of its energy, mostly in the form of oil from the Persian Gulf. It will also almost certainly be a society that will have to adjust to lower levels of energy consumption than the power interests are planning.

The immediate politics are not very complicated. The hundred-odd property owners in Brumley Gap don't want their valley flooded. But they are neither rich, nor radical, nor particularly sophisticated. One of the handful of university-trained environmentalists who is trying to help them in their fight to save the valley says, 'Just about the only thing you could organise



Brumley Gap Methodist Church: threatened with flooding.

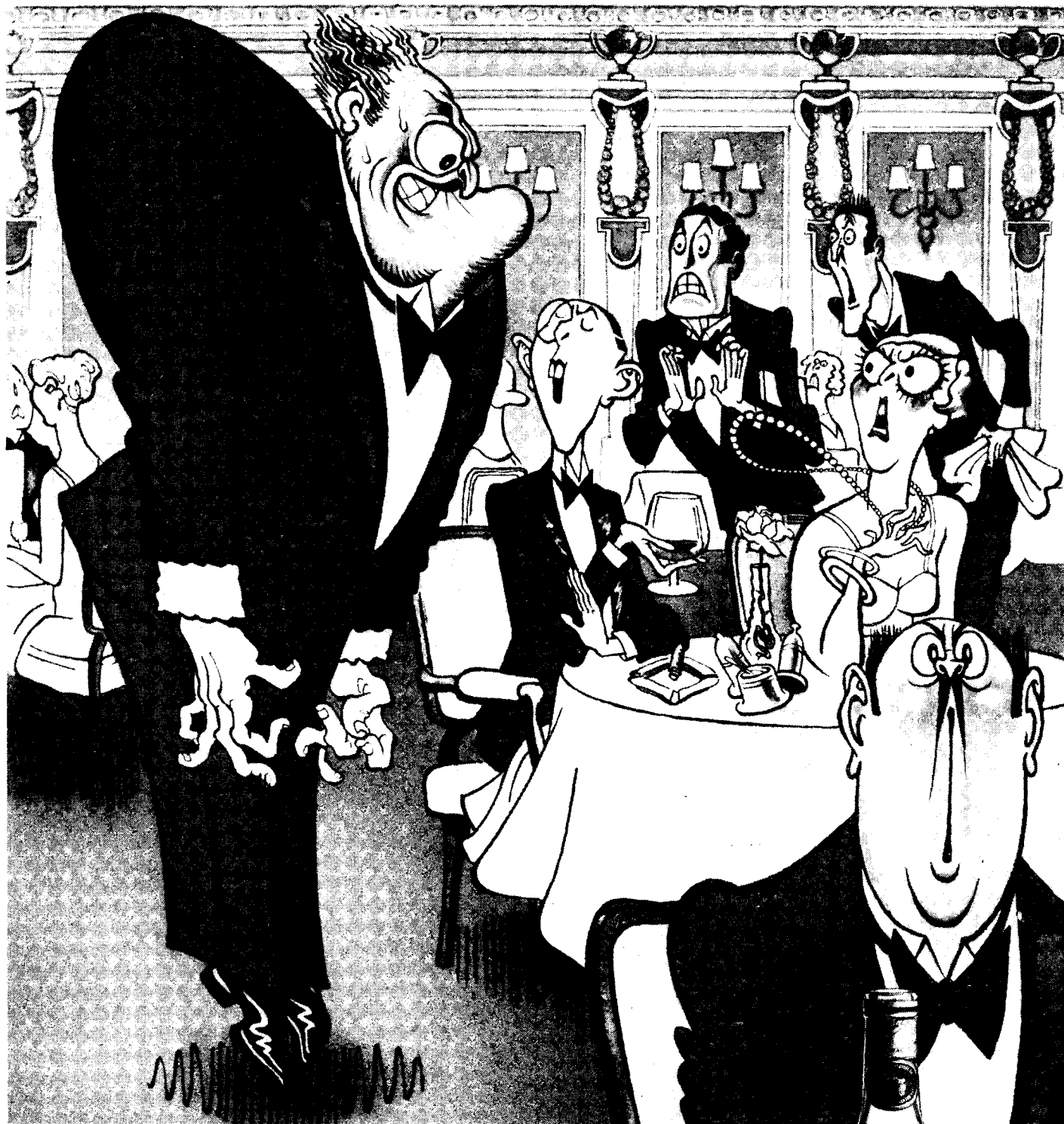
these people against is the devil.' A Coalition of Appalachian Energy Consumers has been formed. It includes the Mineworkers' Union and various national environmental groups. But there are limits to the interests shared between mountain people fighting for their homes, and radicals or environmentalists battling the power interests on ideological grounds.

What's more, the people of Poor Valley are far outnumbered by the rest of the inhabitants of Washington county, who are somewhat tempted by the company's promise to create 800-1,200 (temporary) construction jobs, and even more tempted by the lower taxes they think they will have to pay once the county's tax base has been swollen by a billion dollars' worth of pump storage.

The APCO project has only begun to go through the rather lengthy process of getting official permission to build, whether at Brumley Gap or at Powell Mountain. The company has applied for a preliminary permit from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Supposing APCO wins that round, it will still have to apply to the Department of the Interior in Washington; to the Virginia Public Utility Commission for permission to raise its electricity rates to pay for the project; and finally for a definitive licence from the FERC.

It is worth noticing that each of these applications is in the public domain, so that the public, whether directly affected or not, has far better opportunities of learning about and of opposing such giant power projects in the US than in Britain – even though, in quasi-legal proceedings of this kind, the dice are heavily loaded in favour of big power companies that can afford to be represented

With acknowledgements to the creative genius of H. M. Bateman.



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by squadrons of expensive lawyers.

At the very least, in any case, it will be three years before the company is able to start moving earth, and probably far longer. And so far the lack of political interest on the State, let alone the Federal level is deafening. Only one of Virginia's congressmen has shown any interest whatever in what – quite apart from the issues involved – will be the biggest single hydroelectric project in the western hemisphere.

Yet larger issues are involved. For one thing, APCO admits that a pump storage facility, either at Brumley Gap or at Powell Mountain, would have to be tied into one of the new extra-high voltage (EHV) 765 kV power transmission lines. Because transporting electric power at high voltages is more economical, especially because of the reduced amount of land that needs to be bought for right of way to transmit a given voltage, more and more of these EHV lines are likely to be built in the future, both in the United States and elsewhere. Indeed there is talk of building ultra-high-voltage (UHV) lines to carry 1,000 kV and even higher voltages. American Electric Power, APCO's parent company, pioneered extra-high-voltage transmission, and already operates the first 765 kV line to be built in the United States, in Ohio and adjacent States. But many more are planned, and opposition is building up.

The people who live in the vast tract of upper New York State above the Mohawk valley call it the North Country. It is an area bigger than Wales, chiefly occupied by the Adirondack mountains, and most of the skimpy population lives along the St Lawrence river in the north, in a area of dairy farms, sugar maples and a few riverside industries. Canadian cities like Montreal and Ottawa are far nearer than the New York State capital at Albany, let alone the City, as it is called with a mixture of fear and loathing. North Country people have a long history of feeling alternately ignored and exploited by both Albany and the City, and their feeling is by no means unjustified.

Now the inverted triangles of a 765 kV line are beginning to snake across the North Country, and the traditional local resentments are boiling over. Last year, demonstrators went through the motions of offering their bodies to the chain saw – in front of the cameras, of course – when the felling crews moved in to start clearing the right of way for the line. There were more demonstrations when I was in the North Country in October this year.

One good reason for resisting the spread of 765 kV lines is that they may well be dangerous. No one knows how dangerous. There are no official safety standards in the United States governing the safe limits on the intensity of electromagnetic fields from EHV lines. The electric field from a 765 kV line 45 feet above the ground is strong enough to put a voltage into objects such as vehicles or fences, that can give someone who touches them a nasty shock.

Even more worrying are the biological effects of the electrical and magnetic fields from 765 kV lines. Studies done in the Soviet Union suggest that people working with superhigh voltages complained of headaches, irritability, fatigue, faulty memory, heart

pains and sexual impotence.

Soviet transmission systems are differently and – Americans believe – less safely built than US lines. But American researchers, too, have found what one of them has called 'a solid body of data' indicating that living organisms are adversely affected by EHV fields. The effects can apparently include serious damage to human cardiovascular and central nervous systems. EHV lines also produce ozone in quantities that could harm animals, humans and growing crops, not to mention radio interference and noise.

That is bad enough. But the North Country opponents of 765 kV lines suspect that behind them lurks an even more obnoxious threat: nuclear power. There are already several nuclear power stations in New York State. But environmentalists in the North Country are afraid that, just because their part of New York State is an empty area between the great conurbations of New York, Boston, Buffalo and Montreal, the power companies, aided and abetted by State and local government, intend to turn it into a vast nuclear energy centre for north-east North America.

A report by one local journalist and environmental campaigner, Jackie Sharpe, finds that after Congress passed the Energy Reorganisation Act in 1974, the Argonne National Laboratory proposed the St Lawrence valley as one of four alternative sites for such a nuclear energy centre. She said the government report called for building no fewer than twelve 765 kV lines in six corridors, each 430 feet wide.

The same fear of nuclear power also underlies some of the opposition to the Brumley Gap or Powell Mountain pump storage projects in Virginia. Coal or oil operated generating plants may be inefficient on a peak basis, but it is possible to cool them down and use them to generate different levels of power at different times. Nuclear plants, on the other hand, cannot be operated on a peak basis at all. And so the opponents of nuclear power suspect that the ultimate rationale for building immensely expensive and relatively inefficient pump storage plants can only be an intention on the part of the power companies of going over to nuclear generation in a major way.

But behind the immediate clash of interests, for example between the power companies and their customers in the cities on the one side, and the minorities who inhabit the unspoiled arcadias of North America on the other; and behind even the serious environmental arguments, there lie yet more basic issues of political power and purpose.

In the past dozen years, many developments have thrown doubt on the desirability and the practicability of infinite economic growth. But nowhere is the argument more clearcut than in the case of energy. The power companies – and the oil companies, the natural gas interests, the coal people, and all the formidable coalition of political and economic power they have built up between them – see the energy crisis as mere shortage. Their response is to raise the price of energy, so that the United States will once again be self-sufficient in it, and the majestic march of economic growth can go on.

But as more and more farmers see high voltage pylons sweeping across their land, and more and more mountain people face the flooding of their valleys for hydroelectric plants, or their ravaging by strip-mining, above all as more and more consumers face endlessly rising bills for every kind of fuel, this energy producers' philosophy is bound to come more and more sharply in conflict in the arena of practical politics with a new philosophy that cries halt.

This is already not only a clash of ideologies, but also an argument about matters of fact. The power companies say that the demand for energy will be such in the future that they must start building new generating plants right now to meet future demand. But conservationists project far lower demand curves. And they point out that the power companies have every interest in maximising estimates of future demand, since the greater the demand, the greater the supply, and the greater the profit for suppliers working essentially on a cost-plus rate basis. Moreover the power companies' rates, fixed all too often by compliant State (not Federal) regulatory bodies, take account of construction costs for new generating and transmission facilities.

It would be premature to predict a major political rebellion against the power companies. Americans are so ideologically inclined that they will rebel against taxes paid to government long before they rebel against electricity rates charged by private companies. But they are not fools. And in the end the assumption, diligently spread by decades of prestige advertising and buttressed by massive political activity, that the interests of the consumer and those of the commercial producer are identical, is bound to come under increasingly sharp scrutiny.

It would also be wrong to generalise too widely from two specific controversies – the battle over nuclear power in the New York North Country, and the case of the Virginia pump storage project – even though these are two of the most important test cases to have come up so far. What can be said is that already these and similar projects have raised – as well as important and difficult issues of law, and equity, and environmental health – new questions of power and politics.

The power companies say they do not want to base their policies on asking Americans to make 'life style changes.' For those Americans who happen to live in Poor Valley or the North Country, of course, that policy itself will change and even destroy their life style. But that affects only a few whom the power interests no doubt feel they can afford to ignore. What is more to the point, because even the most powerful interests cannot afford to ignore it, is that the United States is entering an age of energy shortage – if not absolutely, or even compared to Western Europe or Japan, yet certainly relative to the historic abundance of cheap energy in Northern America. In such a new period, American politics will be to a considerable extent the politics of energy. What's more, those who want to understand how the United States is going to behave will have to learn to study those politics in places like Brumley Gap and in the St Lawrence valley, as well as in Washington and in the Persian Gulf.

WILL THE REAL STEVE AUSTIN PLEASE STAND UP?

Bionic Inflation: The Eight Million Dollar Man.

Read 'The Real Bionic Man' in OMNI. The University of Utah has already gone one step beyond the Six Million Dollar Man.

They've just spent over eight million dollars in bio-engineering. And achieved some remarkable results.

Will Des. Res. with All Mod. Cons. include a Home Computer?

Read about 'Computer Lib' in OMNI. You can buy a domestic computer for as little as £300. And some of these small machines are more powerful than the computer that ran international businesses only 15 years ago.

The 'Future Shock' author asks: Are we living in the future now?

Read the Alvin Toffler interview in OMNI.

What kind of society are we creating? A new society? Or merely an extended larger-than-life version of our present society?

Toffler has other ideas.

Dolphin Talk – can we fathom it out?

Read 'Communicating with Dolphins' in OMNI.

Dolphins are known to make certain sounds in the presence of humans. And only in the presence of humans.

Computers are now helping us to decode Dolphin talk into language we can understand.

If you were the last whale you would sing a sad song too.

Read 'Whale Song' by Leigh Kennedy in OMNI.

The whale had felt the danger for weeks, tasting man-ness and potential death in the water.

He'd called and called for others. This season he heard nothing.

I am lost. I am alone.

New



TOMORROW'S MAGAZINE TODAY.

Chris Pond reports on the widening gap between rich and poor

The unacceptable face of Labour's pay policy

One claim regularly made in favour of wage restraint is that it protects the low paid: it stops them being crushed underfoot as more powerful and privileged groups of employees race for a bigger pay packet. Now, however, two new surveys provide embarrassing evidence to the contrary. One shows that women and the low-paid both lost ground during previous stages of pay policy. The other demonstrates that, last year, executives once again drove a coach and horses (or perhaps a company Rover) through the government's pay limits.

In each of the past three years, managerial staff have had salary increases well above the limits set by current pay policies. The latest report from Inbucon/AIC* shows this year has been no exception. In a survey of 7,605 executives between July 1977 and 1978 — which roughly coincides with Stage Three and its ten per cent limit — the average (median) manager enjoyed a salary increase of 16.5 per cent. Personnel executives and company secretaries did particularly well, with rises of more than 20 per cent. During the same period, the average earnings of all workers rose by 14.2 per cent and the Retail Price Index rose by only 7.8 per cent.

But that is only part of the picture. Tax concessions introduced by the 1978 Finance Act made a big difference to the take-home pay of higher earners. Managers who receive the average (median) salary of £7,750 do not have to pay a penny over the basic rate of tax, even if they are single without dependants, now that the threshold has been raised to £8,000. If the gross salary figures in the Inbucon survey are adjusted for income tax, national insurance contributions and child benefit (for a two child family) the average manager's increase throughout the year goes up to 18.6 per cent — compared to 16.9 per cent for the average employee.

The authors of the survey argue that executives have still suffered a decline in living standards over the last four years. They point out that between July 1974 and July 1978 the average salary of executives rose by 69 per cent both before and after tax, while average earnings for all workers went up by 84 per cent and retail prices rose by 81 per cent. However, their calculations of after-tax salaries ignore the effects of mortgage interest relief, superannuation, insurance premiums and other tax allowances which significantly reduce tax liability at these income levels. And their figure of 69 per cent applies to *jobs*, not *job holders*; in other words, they take no account of the fact that most managers would have expected to be promoted or to change jobs between 1974 and 1978, thereby achieving larger salary increases.

More important still, the 69 per cent figure does not include the vast range of

Table 1

How the poor get poorer					
	Average (median) gross weekly earnings £	Poorest 10 per cent		Richest 10 per cent	
		Gross weekly earnings £	As proportion of average %	Gross weekly earnings £	As proportion of average %
All Men					
1976	65.8	44.5	67.6	104.9	159.5
1977	72.3	49.3	68.1	114.0	157.7
1978	82.0	54.8	66.8	129.5	157.9

(Department of Employment New Earnings Survey 1978)

perks and benefits enjoyed by senior executives. We learn from another part of the Inbucon survey that in 1977-8 cash benefits (bonuses, commissions, share in profits, directors' fees, etc) added 5.3 per cent to the basic salary of the average manager, lifting it from £8,873 to £9,339. In the case of managing directors, cash benefits added 9.6 per cent to their average basic salary of £16,730 — an additional £1,603 a year.

As Table 2 shows, the proportion of executives receiving non-cash benefits has increased dramatically in recent years. A report published last week by Reward Regional Surveys† estimates that fringe benefits and bonus payments together added £5,050 a year to the £11,700 basic salary of the average managing director in November 1978.

According to the government's *New Earnings Survey* most non-manual workers (except those in education, health and welfare) have fared better than their manual counterparts. Only two of the nine manual occupational groups listed in the survey of

full-time male workers achieved a percentage increase above the average. (These were the relatively well-paid groups of metal and electrical engineers, construction workers and miners.) By contrast, six of the nine non-manual groups received above-average percentage increases. Of the 10 groups who received below-average increases during the year, 8 already had below-average earnings.

The same survey reveals a consistent deterioration in the relative earnings of low paid workers in general and of women in particular. In April 1977 the poorest ten per cent of male workers earned 68.1 per cent of the average (median wage); by April this year, they earned 66.8 per cent of the average (see Table 1). Figures produced this week by the Equal Opportunities Commission show that women's earnings have fallen in relation to men's (see Table 3). This makes an interesting contrast with the hymns of praise to the Equal Pay Act sung in the *Guardian* last month: 'Women now earn 75 per cent — three quarters — of what men get. . . . It looks as if the Equal Pay Act may have achieved at one blow what a hundred years of lobbying has failed to produce.' The figure of 75 per cent was reached by excluding the effects of overtime and hours worked. Even then, it is hardly a tribute to the effectiveness of law when after two and a half years of the Equal Pay Act, men still earn one third more than women.

Stage Four of the pay policy is unlikely to improve the position of the low paid. Even if the five per cent limit is disregarded, the emphasis is still on percentage increases. The White Paper's only concession is a minimum wage target: those earning less than £44.50 a week are to be exempt from the five per cent limit. Trade unions consider £44.50 (half the national average) to be derisory. They want it increased to £60; but even that would leave most families with children worse off than they would be on supplementary benefit.

In April this year there were 4.7 million adults (two thirds of them women) who earned less than £60 for a full week's work including overtime. Without overtime, the numbers rise to 5.8 million. Meanwhile there are still almost two million people who earn less for a full week's work than the government's derisory target of £44.50. That figure, incidentally, is only £2 more than the average weekly increase in pay for managing directors in the Inbucon survey.

Table 2

Executives get more perks					
Benefits	Proportion of sample receiving benefits in:				
	1973	1975	1977	1978	
Full use of company car	55.3	60.6	63.8	67.4	
Subsidised lunches	65.0	63.6	65.9	68.7	
Assistance with house purchase	6.3	6.4	7.4	8.0	
Life assurance (up to 3 x salary)	—	57.9	61.6	62.4	
Free medical insurance	26.4	37.9	38.8	44.1	
Share option scheme	2.5	4.3	3.7	6.0	
Low interest loans	—	—	9.7	9.6	
Bonus	30.2	31.1	33.3	37.1	

(Inbucon survey of 7,605 executives)

Table 3

Women get less equal pay			
Year	Average gross hourly earnings, excluding effects of overtime		Women's earnings as percentage of men's
	Men, 18 and over	Women, 18 and over	
1976	(Pence) 162.9	(Pence) 122.4	% 75.1
1977	177.4	133.9	75.5
1978	200.3	148.0	73.9

* Inbucon/AIC Management Consultants Survey of executive salaries and fringe benefits, 1978.

† Reward Regional Surveys (represents Institute of Personnel Management and Institute of Directors); Salary and living cost survey Nov. 1978.

London Diary

□ Next Tuesday the BBC is broadcasting yet again Christopher Nupen's classic television film of Schubert's 'Trout' quintet. It captures the joyous rehearsals and performance nine years ago of a close-knit group of friends, then still nascent stars – Daniel Barenboim on piano, Itzhak Perlman, violin, Pinchas Zukerman playing the viola as well as he already played the violin, Zubin Mehta, the conductor, on double bass, and, at the centre of it, Jacqueline du Pré. Nupen, an independent producer, has gone on to make other television classics about this tightly-locked generation of musicians – the *Kosher Nostra*, as they are known, though goys and Indians are not entirely excluded. About the beneficial effects of another musical network, I am not so sure. Despite the quality of Nupen's films, they have never been shown in America. Could this be because most of the 'packaging' of European music for television is in the monolithic hands of the German company *Unitel*? *Unitel* grew to prominence under a close alliance with Herbert von Karajan, who wields mighty patronage as musical emperor of Berlin and Salzburg. One of *Unitel*'s tentacles is an exclusive contract with the Exxon oil company, virtually the only sponsor of music on the American Public Broadcasting system. (It is frowned on for sponsors to muscle in on each other's territory.) So, hitherto, virtually the only way an independent producer could get in on the American market was to join the *Unitel* web, something Nupen has always refused to do. Now, however, after nine years of trying, he seems to have found a chink in the armour. He was recently showing his films to students at the summer music school in Aspen, Colorado. They created such a sensation that they had to be given repeated showings, and Atlantic Richfield, the financiers of the Aspen Institute, gingerly decided to put up the money to sponsor their broadcast on CBS television. Let us hope that by avoiding one cultural octopoid, Nupen has not joined another. Atlantic Richfield's tentacles stretch far and wide – even into the *Observer*.

□ The first authorised biography of Biggles, by John Pearson, will not go down well with the South Australian authorities, who recently banned Capt W. E. Johns's works on the heroic pilot, whom they accused of racism and sexism. Mr Pearson, delving into a family background that could not be revealed while Squadron-Leader James Biggleworth was still alive, quotes one of his uncles as saying, under stress, 'A Britisher is worth two Huns, five Frenchmen, and a dozen darkies. So pull yourself together.'

'I've always had this lingering thing about Biggles,' Mr Pearson says. 'He *did* have a sex life that no-one knows about. Even Capt Johns failed to mention his relationship with the beautiful spy, Marie Janis. 'What do you mean, you disagree with me about Biggles being a red-faced portly little man when I knew him in his old age?' (I had always thought of Biggles as tall, thin, and interestingly pale.) Still, Mr Pearson, who also wrote the authorised biography of James Bond, should know what he's talking about. 'It was a jolly thing to do, and a bit of light relief from

the Sitwells.' His unauthorised biography of those fictional characters comes out shortly before Biggles.

□ Six days before the threatened suspension of Times Newspapers on 30 November, Philip Howard, reporter, classical scholar and ace semantics correspondent of *The Times*, is giving a Radio 4 broadcast about what will be one of the most lamented features should the paper close – the bottom right-hand corner of the correspondence column. Among more recent gems, his favourite is a contribution to the controversy over the need for a genderless form of address. It took the form of a neat re-write of Horace: 'Parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus Ms.' Historically, he savours the famous correspondence about the manning and construction of the Greek trireme, which went on for weeks. 'It was fun, but at the same time deeply serious. You had marine engineers talking to classical scholars – we nearly made a book out of it.' His most cherished letter from the trireme battle was the one that ran, so recondite had the subject become: 'Sir, It was long ago shown by Galileo that in order to boil eggs by whirling them round your head in a sling, as the Babylonians did, it is necessary to be a Babylonian – to which Philip responded, with admirable brevity, 'In order to design and build a 12-knot trireme, as the ancient Greeks did, it is first necessary to be an ancient Greek.' *Finis*.

□ Andre Brink, whose novel *Rumours of Rain* was among the six short-listed for the Booker prize (just won by Iris Murdoch), is a man of unusual calm given his background as a liberal Afrikaner. 'You have to have a sense of humour to survive', he said on a recent visit to London. 'I come from a very conventional family and the authorities can't understand it. My telephone is tapped, my mail opened, my typewriters confiscated and even when I go on holiday, I'm followed. You get to know your local security officer eventually and even say hello to him. It's ridiculous.'

Why, I asked, did he not leave? Was he not supporting the system by staying there? 'Absolutely the opposite. There's nothing they'd like better than for me to leave. But words carry a lot of weight – if you can get them published, that is.' (In 1973, most unusually for a book in Afrikaans, his novel *Looking on Darkness* was banned.)

He finds Afrikaners baffling creatures. 'They might utterly loathe the blacks as an idea, but in personal dealings they become almost paternalistic. Outside South Africa, at parties, you nearly always find an Afrikaner and a black will huddle together – a sentimental attachment to Mother Africa, I suppose. After all, we've both been subject to imperial aggression, haven't we?' (I'd never thought of the Boer Wars in those terms.) 'Nobody knows what will happen – something must, but whether it will be peaceful or violent, who can say? We might contribute, but in the end the blacks will have to do it for themselves.'

□ Perhaps unaware of my basic frivolity, the socialist Pluto Press kindly sent me a copy of their Big Red Diary for 1979, with a gloomy fact on every page. However, in a week when London boroughs were advised how to deal with the aftermath of nuclear attack, and tighter safety limits set on the amount of plutonium workers could absorb without

actually dying, the diary will doubtless bring cheer to many. Jan 3: 'Lead coffins for reactor victims'; Feb 2: 'We don't really know what is going on inside a reactor'; April 21: 'A spacerocket motor killed a cow in the Caribbean' (WHAT?); Aug 28: 'Reactor operators on the Japanese nuclear-powered ship, the NS Mutsu, attempt to plug a radiation leak with old socks, after boiled rice proved ineffective.' Deadliest of all is a quote from Edward Teller, the Hungarian whose work led to the H-bomb: '... with the great number of simians around monkeying around with things they do not understand, sooner or later a fool will prove greater than the proof even in a fool-proof system.' Please will someone send me a diary with a joke on every page?

□ Despite condemnation by the British Medical Association, the Army & Navy Store's new Blood Pressure Department is doing well. On the day after the Vita-stat computer was installed last week, well over 200 shoppers paid 50p each to take their own blood pressure. Since then the number of those anxious to find out their systolics and diastolics has settled down to a steady 80-100 a day. Mr Tim Collins, managing director of Sousurg Medical Ltd, has no time for the BMA, which argued that the mere sight of the machine might well cause high blood pressure. 'They're a load of old fuddy-duddies', he told me. 'They have a vested interest in protecting the Harley Street lot, who charge £10 or so for the same thing.' (The malicious might well accuse Mr Collins himself of vested interests, since he has ordered 20 such computers for distribution 'through high-class outlets').

This particular model was invented in late 1975 by an American physician with the unlikely name of Dr M. Ramsay the Third. It uses the traditional inflatable cuff but the Korotkoff heart sounds are electronically measured. Mr Collins is undismayed by criticism. 'Most doctors are behind me, and I've been invited to lecture to an important medical conference next week on hypertension.' Taking a random sample of medical opinion, I found some doctors in favour of the machine, on the grounds that taking people's blood pressure was incredibly boring. The more conscientious, however, like patients to lie down for ten minutes before blood pressure is taken, difficult to organise in a crowded department store. Maybe, I suggested, the computer could be transferred to the Beds & Bedding Department? 'We have no plans for that at the moment', Army & Navy replied, 'we can't have it looking like a rest-room.'

Ruth Hall

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

□ The Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth (Lord Diamond) has a salary of £9,255 for 2½ days work a week. – *Guardian* (Bea Brindley).

□ The Duke sat down to lunch with most of the 500-strong workforce in the canteen of Campbell's Soups but the normal canteen furniture had been replaced with cloth-covered tables, candelabra and gold chairs. – *Lynn News and Advertiser* (Mrs F.R. Flukin).

First Person

Arthur Marshall

On Our Own Heads

When appalling disasters befall nations (the Führer's mad megalomania springs instantly to mind), it is some sort of sorrowful consolation to the survivors to realise that, through blind and supine behaviour (and here our thoughts flash guiltily homewards), they have nobody but themselves to blame. This holds good, and how, for individuals as well. 'Brought the whole thing on myself' is a constant and sadly mournful cry, but a cry uttered without resentment, of human beings who have got themselves into a pickle. But calamities that can in no way be laid at one's door are quite another matter. To be squashed flat in an earthquake would fill what was left of one with furious indignation at the injustice of it all. A nip from a mad dog ('Down, Rover!') just isn't fair. To be struck by lightning during the graceful follow-through part of a faultlessly lofted approach shot to the fifth green, with the ball lying as dead as the striker of it, would cause one's angry ghost to haunt the links for ever more, shouting 'Boo!' at tense moments and putting everybody off.

I do not wish in any way to spread gloom and despondency but it is my opinion that every single one of our current British misfortunes and our *dégringolade* (roughly, landslip) into being a laughing-stock among nations ('*Qui pensent-ils qu'ils sont?*') is richly deserved. The causes go back many years but it was perhaps in the Twenties and Thirties that we were to be seen at our weirdest and most wonderful. The poet Wordsworth, such a one for hitting nails on the head ('Our noisy years seem moments in the being of the eternal Silence'), once announced in jocund mood that 'Bliss it was that dawn to be alive, But to be young was very heaven', and although he chanced at the time to be speaking of the French Revolution, 'As It Appeared to Enthusiasts', the general sense of euphoria and the feeling that something very nasty was over at last, will do well for the twenties and for that privileged section that was referred to as 'the ruling classes' (government, peers, church, law and, heaven help us all, 'society'). The war was finished and there would never be another one. Meanwhile, on with the dance. Noisy years indeed.

Looking back now, it is almost impossible to believe that some of the endlessly reported oddities actually took place. A public-school boy attempted to murder the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police with arsenical chocs ('He got sun-stroke on the playing fields' explained the boy's parents). A Mrs Travers-Smith of Cheyne Gardens, Chelsea, claimed that she was getting spirit messages from Oscar Wilde. The Vicar of All Saints, Cheltenham, suddenly caught fire in the very middle of his sermon: briskly extinguished by the verger, he immediately caught fire again. An Old Etonian, arrested in Vienna for theft, was allowed to send out for his favourite marmalade. Lord Northcliffe, rather losing his hold on things, was found to be living in a

small wooden shack on the roof of a house in Carlton Gardens. The first birth took place on the Bakerloo Line, and Bernard Shaw learnt to tango. An old (very old) Rugby boy, had up before the magistrates for swindling, was found to have emergency cyanide capsules concealed beneath his wig. The Maharajah of Patiala's pants were said to cost £200 a time. An Arabian prince escaped from a private asylum in Sussex and was later seen strolling in the Forest of Fontainebleau smartly dressed in female attire. At her christening, Princess Elizabeth yelled so loudly that she had to be liberally dosed with dill-water. Gandhi arrived, bringing with him eighteen bottles of pasteurised goat's milk. Unity Mitford attended various dances with her pet grass-snake, Enid, slung round her neck. Mr Ernest Simpson's 'impropriety' that enabled Mrs Simpson to get her divorce was with a lady called Buttercup Kennedy. Lord Edward Montagu, off to join the Foreign Legion, decided to open a coffee-stall in Maidenhead instead ('This is just the beginning').

All forms of travel were particularly productive of quaint happenings. The public were aghast to learn of the theft from a train on the Paddington to Oxford run of the manuscript of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, though some of course were quite a good bit more aghast than others. At St Pancras there was absolutely no knowing what might not occur. Lady Grimston's diamonds were snatched from her in the refreshment rooms, and the King himself was attacked by a small and club-footed man who struck gamely out at him with his crutch ('Suffering from shell shock. I imagine,' said

Roger Woddis

Cheers for Chile

The Chilean regime has hired an American public relations expert to promote a favourable image abroad.

Let the golden word go forward,
Winged and wild across the sea:
Spread the news, so long distorted,
Pinochet should be supported;
Mocked, maligned and misreported,
Chile is the place to be.

Shanty towns in Santiago
Gleam like castles in the air.
In between the open spaces
Coca-Cola packing-cases
Bring a glow to childlike faces –
Don't you wish that you were there?

Hell seems far removed from heaven
Only to the jaundiced eye.
Free from prejudice and rancour,
Everybody loves a chancre,
As your international banker,
Hand on heart, will testify.

His Majesty, nobly exonerating his assailant and obviously not noticing the foot). Abroad, the elderly President of France managed to fall out of the presidential train and mooned about for quite a time in his pyjamas. The Earl of Craven fell off his yacht at Cowes, hotly followed by Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, recently the C.I.G.S. (fished safely out). At the Gare de Nord, Raymond de Trafford was shot by the Countess de Janzé who, on being asked why she did it, murmured 'It is my secret' and was fined the equivalent of 16s 6d.

Royalty could always be relied upon for memorable moments. The Prince of Wales, dining informally with Mrs Simpson at Bryanston Court, was said to have been fascinated by her raspberry soufflé. His father, however, was considerably less fascinated ('After I am dead, the boy will ruin himself in twelve months'). Queen Mary was here, there and everywhere – at the Chelsea Flower Show and sampling a luscious new strawberry called 'Sir Douglas Haig', attending a performance of *No No Nanette* and lowering her lorgnettes when the bathing-dressed chorus appeared, getting stuck in a lift in Upper Brook Street, being fitted for a gas-mask, trudging tirelessly round the film studios at Denham ('I don't mind steps when I'm interested') and being overturned in her maroon-coloured Daimler and breaking her umbrella ('No fuss. I'm quite all right').

How terribly short one's memory is. Did Mussolini really come over to England in 1922 and, welcomed by cheering crowds at Victoria Station, stay at Claridge's and then dine at Buckingham Palace, where he was reported to be 'in fine fettle'? Did Hitler's nephew, Willie, truly visit his English mother in Highgate in 1937 ('My uncle is a peaceful man') and subsequently announce (in America, wisely) that, in the event of war, he would 'join up immediately for England'? One firm memory does remain. Lady Astor, in Moscow and received by Stalin, rapidly brushed aside formalities and polite chat and got down to important matters ('When will you stop killing people?').

In the pre-war years, anything might happen. A conveyor-belt was installed at Chatsworth which transported the ducal soup the 109 yards from kitchens to dining-room at a speed of 7 m.p.h. Princess Margaret made her first trip by Underground and found herself sitting next to a charlady from Muswell Hill. The Duke of Manchester popped some jewellery that didn't actually belong to him and was himself popped into Wormwood Scrubs for a month or so. Disgraced MP Horatio Bottomley appeared in non-stop variety at the Windmill Theatre (assorted anecdotes and chestnuts, followed by a heart attack). The French-born Begum Aga Khan declared that Hitler was the most attractive man she had ever met (newspaper heading: BY GUM, BEGUM!).

You may possibly have been asking yourselves whence comes this flow of information. Some readers may already know the splendid source, but for those who don't I will reveal all next week and open wide once more the flood-gates of fascinating fact concerning our post-war capers. In the field of startling revelations, the ghost of Hamlet's father has absolutely nothing on me. I shall a tale unfold whose lightest word will cause readers' eyes, like stars, to start from their spheres, so give those gig-lamps an extra polish and lay in a jumbo bottle of Optrex.

Letters to the Editor

Oilgate and the workers

Sir, The NEW STATESMAN has taken the lead over the last few months in arguing for change in the relationship between British Petroleum and its major shareholder, the government. The resignation of Dennis Greenhill from the BP board reported by Martin Bailey last week provides an opportunity for the immediate improvement of this relationship. It is no longer appropriate for the government to appoint a director who is inexperienced in the complexities of the oil industry and who has no knowledge of the internal workings of the company. The lack of expert knowledge among recent government directors and their consequent inability to ask the appropriate questions may have compounded the confusion over BP's activities in Southern Africa.

The appointment now of a director from among the company's employees on the advice of the trade unions operating within the BP Group could only serve to improve the situation. It would be firm evidence of the government's commitment to rationalising its relationship with the company. In addition, following the experience of similar government appointments in the Post Office and the British Steel Corporation, it would show that the Cabinet is prepared to use its power of nomination to initiate industrial democracy in advance of the legislation promised in the Queen's Speech.

BOB HAMILTON

Flat 1
162 Lordship Road, London N16

Poor old Sam!

Sir, After the following exchange via written Parliamentary Question between Sam Silkin and myself –

'INSIDE STORY'

Mr Rooker asked the Attorney-General if he will refer to the Director of Public Prosecutions for prosecution under the Official Secrets Act the publication of 'Inside Story' by Mr Chapman Pincher.

The Attorney-General: I have received no information which would justify my doing so.

– I had fully intended to send him an itemised list of references from Pincher's book where it is clear, if he is telling the truth, that there have been breaches of the Official Secrets Act.

Instead I have sent him last week's NEW STATESMAN piece by E. P. Thompson which, if not acted upon, should convince the last doubter in the land that the Attorney-General is not fit to hold office.

JEFF ROOKER

House of Commons
London SW1

Changing IQs

Sir, I hope that David Wendon (Letters, 10 November) won't be allowed to get away with his dictum that 'one's IQ does not alter from the cradle to the grave'. The question of whether intelligence depends to some, or even a major, extent on environment – which of course can change – is what the whole, still unresolved debate is all about. I myself have had three different IQs when tested on entering secondary school, at university and in the Army. As I am still trying to make a living by impressing others with my intelligence, you will forgive me for not disclosing my scores. The progress from my first score to my second, if maintained, would have made me a greater genius than Einstein by now, but I fear that my third test showed a regression. True, I had noted the undesirability of thinking in the Army.

But whether the cause lay in my own uneven development or in variations in testing techniques, I shouldn't care to say. There are persuasive grounds

for the view that all these tests are so crude and misleading as to be useless; indeed, that may be true of the entire concept of an IQ. When I was working on *Tribune* in 1959, a teacher in Kent sent us a question from the 11-plus test which defeated the whole staff. We challenged the Minister of Education to have a shot at it, but he didn't answer. Trotting it out is still one of my party tricks, and by this time it has beaten several professors. Kids in Kent did nevertheless get into grammar schools, so I leave Mr Wendon with the logical conclusion that intelligence declines steadily after the age of 11.

MERVYN JONES

10 Waterside Place,
London NW1

Old school ties

Sir, Could your correspondent Mary Duncan (NS 10 November) please explain to me, as a 'state school chappy', what a 'preceptor' is? (I was unfortunate enough to have been born the child of parents who were so criminally irresponsible that they did not have enough money to send me to Harrow.)

As a 'state school' person I would also like to point out that despite lacking the public school 'ability... knowledge... and sheer self-confidence' which lots of money can buy, I had written about 20 articles for two leading national newspapers by the age of 19. And this may be dismissed as grammar school and sixth-form arrogance, but it seems that Mr Wheen got his facts wrong about his own school's examination results. Not a great advertisement for Harrovian education, is he?

JOHN PAUL SWEENEY

Passfield Hall
Endsleigh Place, London WC1

Francis Wheen writes: Before Mary Duncan's suggestion that I was wrong about the Harrow results passes into popular history, I should point out that my information about the emergency governors' meeting came from an unimpeachable source – a member of the board of governors. Since this correspondence has now become rather wearisome I shall conclude by commending Mr Sweeney's last sentence, thanking all those who wrote in with offers of help after the sock-darning revelations last week, and asking to be left in peace.

Rehabilitating Rickword

Sir, Derek Mahon, reviewing Edgell Rickword's *Literature in Society: Essays 1931-1978* (NS 10 November), says that the author's name is 'vaguely familiar to most people who take an interest in modern poetry'. Just how vaguely familiar the name is to him he makes clear in the sequel. He gets most of his facts wrong: facts a visit to Rickword's earlier books, published interviews, or to essays on his work, would have provided.

Few people imagine Rickword to have been a 1930s poet. He is ten years older than Auden and most of his poetry was written and published in the 1920s. Few would imagine Rickword to be a political poet. Only one of his major poems is specifically political. Others have social content – but by that token Larkin, R. S. Thomas, Thom Gunn, John Betjeman, almost any poet becomes political. Rickword did not join the Communist Party until the early 1930s when, by and large, he had done with writing poetry anyway. Mr Mahon calls him a 'political poet' because the common liberal prejudice is that a Marxist cannot write any other sort of poetry. That Rickword was not a Marxist when he composed the body of his poetry, and that many a Marxist has interests other than the class struggle, are facts beyond the grasp of critics who trust categories and labels rather than the work itself. Mr Mahon's 'information' tells him Rickword is still a member of the CP. This too is false. He left the CP unostentatiously on the Soviet invasion of Hungary

a couple of decades back. Mr Mahon's grapevine needs tending to.

Mr Mahon adduces two reasons for Rickword's neglect. I can add a couple more. The popular assumption that 'Marxist' equals 'single-minded' and therefore clumsy and boring is one reason. Because Rickword became a Marxist, he put himself beyond the pale for critics like Mr Mahon whose prejudices must be taken to be common. Had Rickword recanted his membership of the CP ostentatiously, like Auden, he might have 'rehabilitated' himself in Mr Mahon's eyes. The second reason for Rickword's neglect has been the unavailability of his work for over a quarter of a century. We have at least put that right.

It gives me particular pain to see Rickword so caricatured in the pages of a magazine for which many of his early essays were written – at a time when that magazine had a certain consistency in the standards of accuracy and style it applied to its literary pages.

MICHAEL SCHMIDT

Carcanet New Press
330 Corn Exchange, Manchester

Number games

Sir, Would you add me to the list of people pointing out to Ruth Hall that she should really have said 'two positive non-zero cubes', and that the next higher one is 4104 ($15^3 + 9^3 = 16^3 + 2^3$).

If you don't allow negative numbers, there is no smaller number.

GRAHAM CLEVERLEY

29 London Road
Southampton

Interpretations of Israel

Sir, I am sorry that Ansel Harris (Letter, 3 November) thought my article on Camp David 'mean'. Peace between Egypt and Israel will obviously be a good thing and in the long term revolutionise relations between the two countries. It is even possible that this bilateral agreement will be followed by similar settlements between Israel, Syria and Jordan, especially if the United States continues to play an active role. But the prospect of any lasting peace in the Middle East will remain as remote as ever as long as the central issue – the future of the Palestinians – is circumvented.

It is true, as Mr Harris writes, that 'the Middle East lives with a series of problems that are independent of Israel'. To say this, however, should not be to ignore the indisputable fact that finding a solution to the problem of the existence of two peoples in one land is not unconnected to the policies that the Israeli government chooses to pursue.

David M. Jacobs (Letters, 3 November) takes me to task over my article about Arab labour in Israel. He accuses me of having found a 'subtle method' to attack the existence of the Jewish state. I do this, he asserts, by selecting an individual Israeli policy – in this case the problem of the employment in Israel of Arab workers from the occupied territories – and presenting it with a 'racist slant'. If I am guilty of such a heinous crime then at least I am not alone. In the last few months dozens of articles have appeared in the Hebrew press in Israel deploring this phenomenon – rightly believed to contradict the ideals of the Zionist movement – and warning that if allowed to continue it will lead inevitably, as I wrote, to the 'South Africanisation' of Israel. Nor am I alone in believing that the retention of the occupied territories poses a grave danger to the democratic character of the country. I did not 'carefully leave out' (as Mr Jacobs puts it) the fact that Israeli Arabs 'can move freely amongst their Jewish fellow nationals'. I assumed, I suppose, that were that not so, then readers of the NEW STATESMAN would have heard about it by now.

I would venture to suggest that if Mr Jacobs were to spend more time in Israel or reading Israeli newspapers he would be less likely to view any criticism of the Jewish state – which, incidentally, I fully accept 'as a permanent feature of the region' – as a pernicious manifestation of anti-semitism.

IAN BLACK

BOOKS IN GENERAL

Geoffrey Grigson

The Grand Style

Façades: Edith, Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell
by JOHN PEARSON *Macmillan* £9.95

How much of the puzzle of the Sitwells is explained by this cleverly made and rather un pitying account of them? I would say that the puzzle has not really been in the Sitwells themselves – in their work, that is – or even in their conjoint behaviour, but in their audience. Here were two brothers and a sister, a younger brother of slight talent who was in love with art or with a chiefly exotic selection of the arts of the world, a minor poet whose writing has gone on and on quietly, prettily, undramatically, inoffensively as a rule, not upsetting or very much impressing anyone; an elder brother who was in love with himself, on which insecure substructure he wrote flimsy satires in what was characterised to a T by Wyndham Lewis as 'free-verse-and-soda-water', and who finally constructed a too long account of himself in volumes of mandarin unreality; and the sister, the eldest of the three, the one on whom this book really revolves, who was uneducated, and who wrote long loose poems and wore large rings, and was to be widely seconded in her incredible fantasy of self-grandeur.

The family into which these three were born was one of Derbyshire baronets (of rather late creation), Derbyshire squires given to the chase of the fox; an undistinguished line – no Sitwell, for instance, having earned even the shortest account or encomium in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Their childhood in Renishaw Hall, a house aggrandised about 1800 (according to Pevsner) and smutty with neighbouring yet supporting coal-pits, was unsweetened by affection: it was not, to be sure, of a Traherne-like felicity.

Osbert Sitwell and Edith Sitwell rebelled in adolescence and afterwards against their parents and their milieu, and yet retained, for use when required, their kind's insolence and snootiness. An extra propellant and repellent from some aspects of the family was the fall of their elegant mother, Lady Ida, in 1915; she was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for fraud. In retrospect it seems odd that they should have rebelled towards art and letters; and that in season they should adopt or seem to adopt poets and artists less well-heeled than they were themselves, yet likely to support their egos. But outrageously welcome developments were then under way in the European arts; so how outrageous – *vis-à-vis* Renishaw and their upbringing – it would be if they attached themselves, not to foxes' masks, but to that war-delayed modernism which was then seeping into London and the universities, expressed in Eliot's 'Prufrock' in 1917 and then in his *Waste Land* in 1922. They joined up, they struck postures of novelty – without, so far as I can see on the evidence of their acts or their writings, being in the least aware of the new revolutionary *gravitas*.

Anyhow they had met Sickert, that ambivalent cynic – balancing between the old and

effete and the new and in so many ways, as ever, the qualitatively mixed. In 1916, the year after the shocking fall of Lady Ida, Edith had persuaded Basil Blackwell, at Oxford, to bring out the first number of *Wheels*, which amounted to a little magazine (though it seems that the first *Wheels*, to which all three Sitwells contributed, may in fact have been invented – also edited – by Nancy Cunard). The Sitwells encountered their young contemporaries, Eliot, Lewis, Huxley, etc. As rebels (but rebels exactly for what?) they adopted and reviled the standard enemies of the new, Gosse, Eddie Marsh, J. C. Squire, and Squire's bland *London Mercury*.

They had launched themselves. They had to overcome a degree of suspicion or derision among some of their new acquaintances, or so it appeared. But then it always takes some time for the young who band together to settle and shake down, to recognise that some among them fall short of avowals, and reveal pretention; and then, either more or less, to disband, into their individuality. In 1923, in the Aeolian Hall, in *Façade*, Edith declaimed her poems on the sengerphone, to the music of William Walton. *Façade* (an imitation, six years late, of Cocteau's *Parade*, in Paris, to the music of Satie) was ridiculed – in the papers. A check? The papers were low-brow (then a fairly new adjective). What the papers said could be shrugged off, almost (but not quite, not quite) with pleasure. And if Noël Coward made express fun of the Sitwells, he too was common and low-brow and never came from Debrett, and could be disregarded.

Trouble, real trouble, came in 1930, when Wyndham Lewis – after all he had been a friend, if not intellectually an associate – directed against them no counterpart of their own tittering pea-shooters but the heavy guns of *The Apes of God*. Whether that giant novel succeeds is no matter, I think. The decisive thing was that a contemporary of intellectual strength and passion and unambiguity, an inhabitant of what they considered their side of art, if not of life, now said in a loud voice that he saw smack through their total façade. What was not exactly a feud then began, to continue for years. I say not exactly a feud, because if Lewis from then on mentioned the Sitwells, he did so as a rule condescendingly,

with the true satirist's sardonic grin; and by the Sitwells, or their partisans, he could be answered only with abuse.

It is somewhere around this stage that I find John Pearson's energetic account rather wanting in seriousness or discernment, partly perhaps because he was not there at the time (he is too young). That deep, wide revolution still progressed. The last of that integument of dying and decadent idealism was being peeled from sensibility. Not always with equal skill or success or unimpeded vision, of course; but it was just that attempted purification of consciousness, that serious business, which the Sitwells seemed to betray.

Think of some dates. Edith Sitwell was born in 1887, Eliot in 1888, Trakl in 1887, Pasternak in 1890, Lawrence in 1885, James Joyce in 1882, Kafka in 1883. What does Edith or any Sitwell have in common with such contemporaries? Are they to be thought of together? Or perhaps our Number One question in a Sitwell examination paper should be: Can you possibly relate or equate anything written by any Sitwell with Von Hofmannsthal's *Letter of Lord Chandos* of 1902, and its grand and proper call to the new *gravitas*?

I think Mr Pearson does not appreciate Edith Sitwell's offence, and its enormity. But I called his book unpitying. He is not a critic of literature (his last book was about the Kray brothers). He does not want to place the Sitwells, at least not explicitly. But he is a devil and a dab at merciless quotation, which exhibits beyond contradiction the dry, the brittle, the ridiculous. 'I write in the rhythms of Sappho', 'I am as highly stylised as it is possible to be – as stylised as the music of Debussy or Ravel.' That is about as much as it is decent to remember, of all the megalomaniac utterances put again on record in a book which its author, after all, has called *Façades*. So much had she been praised that before the end a breeze of criticism, let alone a faint sign of disagreement, was blasted, as an 'impertinence' (a favourite denunciation). I remember once being shown the book in which distinguished visitors to Harvard signed their names. In a corner, I noticed – I was made to notice, my host being no oleaginous English fool – a small, modest T. S. Eliot or Thomas Mann. Turn over, and the whole page (or was it the whole two-page spread?) was occupied by an enormous *Edith Sitwell*.

It seems to me that Mr Pearson can't really mean many of the things that he allows himself to say, since praise or acceptance, as he runs along, is so soon contradicted by another ludicrous exclamation of the great poetess's about her unique genius, or another vulgar denunciation of 'impertinence'. Not a phrase Mr Pearson exhumes from her consoles us or enlightens us in our predicament. This biographer's tongue is in his cheek. It must be. But he says nothing about what I conceive to be the genuine interest of the matter – the fawning on this poor woman of critics, artists, art historians, litterateurs and hangers-on of one kind and another, often humbly born and socially wobbly; and the deception of the public which they encouraged. But he indicates everything. Reading page 461 – no less a number – he says, 'Her poetry and her fame were all she had to take the place of the lovers, children and home life she had never known.' No doubt. But it was her encomiasts who did not understand – did not want to understand – the different demands of private charity and public values.

NEXT WEEK

Christmas Books – 1

John Bayley on the Faber Popular Reciter, Noël Annan on Marc's Cartoons, Richard Cobb on Dreyfus, George Macdonald Fraser on 'Punch', James Fenton on George Steiner, Gavin Ewart on Pam Ayres, Paul Johnson on the Times Historical Atlas.

A. J. Nicholls

Officers and Gentlemen

Nuremberg by AIREY NEAVE with an introduction by Rebecca West *Hodder & Stoughton* £7.50

The Trial of the major Nazi war criminals began at Nuremberg on 20 November 1945. It lasted 284 days and ended with the passing of death sentences on twelve Nazi leaders, of whom one – Bormann – never appeared, and another – Goering – cheated the hangman by taking poison. Of the other ten before the court, three were acquitted, three were sentenced to life imprisonment and three others to jail sentences of between ten and twenty years.

By any yardstick the trial was an historic event. It seemed to mark a new departure, in that crimes involving the abuse of state power were being investigated and their perpetrators punished. No longer would the mighty be able to commit acts of grandiose and irresponsible butchery, secure in the knowledge that if things went wrong they need fear nothing more serious than early retirement or, at worst, enforced exile. After the horrors of the first world war the cry of 'hang the Kaiser' was heard and efforts were made to institute proceedings against German militarists. Yet nothing effective could be done. The international climate soon changed. Wilhelm II lived on in comfort and his chief war lord, Field Marshal Hindenburg, turned defeat into personal victory by becoming President of the Weimar Republic. No military or political leader was punished for causing a catastrophe which cost millions of lives. The war-mongers of 1914 showed their gratitude by vigorously denying responsibility for the miseries which had befallen Europe as the result of their policies.

The second world war, however, was a catastrophe of such an obviously criminal kind that some punishment had to be meted out to those responsible. This was made easier by the fact that the blame could be put on to men who were not crowned heads or genteel career diplomats, but brown-shirted political adventurers, the followers of Adolf Hitler. His Nazi regime had destroyed German democracy, imprisoned and murdered its German opponents and launched an aggressive European war which had escalated into world conflict. That war itself was accompanied by widespread atrocities and an all too successful attempt at genocide. By 1943 it was clear that public opinion in Allied countries simply would not allow the perpetrators of these crimes to go unpunished.

Yet how could the victors judge the vanquished? This was a problem which exercised the minds of Allied politicians well before it became the subject of academic debate. On the British side there was strong resistance to the idea of a trial, both because it would be denounced as unfair and because it could give the accused a platform from which they might exercise their demagogic powers. Churchill

MANY REASONS WHY

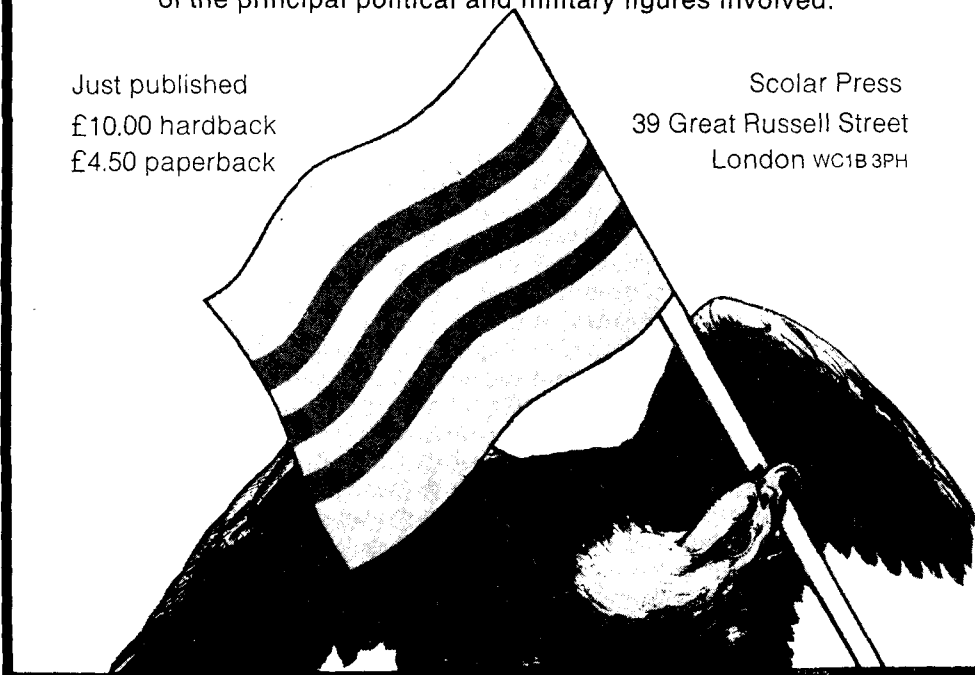
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advocated drawing up a list of prominent Nazis who should simply be identified and summarily shot. It was not until Spring 1945 that the British finally agreed on a trial. Their caution was evidently justified, because ever since Nuremberg there has been a chorus of criticism directed against the decision to hold a trial at all. Much of this was either silly or ill-intentioned, but it was persistent enough to create an impression that the trials were somehow discreditable to those who ran them.

The main arguments against Nuremberg were that the victors were trying the vanquished and that the crimes of which the prisoners were accused included items which had not previously been recognised as open to judicial process. In particular, the indictment for conspiracy to wage aggressive war was troubling to some legal minds because the crime of aggression seemed to have no status in international law. Then again there was the claim that, since the Soviet Government was itself a brutal tyranny, no tribunal which included its representatives could fairly pass judgment on the Nazis. None of these criticisms had much force at the time. They have hardly gained weight since.

So far as the legalistic objection was concerned, it was effectively disposed of by Hartley Shawcross at the trial, when he pointed out that the first men to have been accused of murder might have complained that no such case had ever been tried before. Hitler's wars had been acts of aggression in violation of international treaties, and this put them clearly within the scope of the Nuremberg Tribunal as defined by its charter. If it is held that such a definition was inadmissible, then it

is difficult to see how international law can have any meaning at all. As for the involvement of Russian judges in the trial, there can be no doubt that Nazi aggression against and atrocities within Russia fully merited punishment. The fact that Stalin was – in his own way – every bit as evil as Hitler was irrelevant.

In his personal record of the trial Airey Neave reminds us of the realities of the post-war world and the horrors for which most of those in the dock at Nuremberg had been responsible. A trained lawyer who had himself suffered at the hands of the Gestapo, Neave was chosen to deliver the Allied indictment to the accused as they waited in their cells at Nuremberg. Nearly half of his book consists of biographical portraits of these notorious prisoners based on his own reactions to their behaviour when they were handed the charges. This is not an entirely happy technique; the reader is given a catalogue of varying degrees of human wretchedness, and since the time spent handing over the indictment was really very short, each character sketch has to be fleshed out with biographical details evidently taken from fairly standard historical sources. Even on the level of personal recollection Mr Neave's file-index seems to give an occasional hiccup. We are told, for example, that when entering the cell of Fritz Sauckel he expected 'a huge repulsive figure' and yet a few lines later he says, 'I expected to meet a romantic sea-faring character'. He was disappointed on both counts.

Far more interesting are his comments on the way in which the trials were conducted and his own reactions to the judgments them-

selves. He reminds us that even in 1945 there was an aversion to facing up to the criminal nature of the Nazi war machine. One British general remarked to him, 'Thank God we won the war, Neave. Seems a shame to try men like Keitel and Jodl, both Generals, for losing it.' Neave bravely retorted that the generals were actually being tried for mass murder, not for losing a war. As a soldier himself he felt some sympathy for Jodl who might well have avoided execution had he been tried a year later, when passions had somewhat cooled. Yet Neave does make the important point that controversy over the charges of conspiracy to commit aggression drew public attention away from the more specific war crimes of which the military men were accused.

Neave's account also prompts the reflection that whereas most of the 'gentlemen' among the civilian accused went to prison or even escaped punishment altogether, their social inferiors were hanged. Thus Papen and Schacht were acquitted – to the fury of the local German populace. This may indeed have illustrated one weakness of judicial procedure, in that 'respectable' administrative activities such as banking or diplomacy were difficult to pin down as criminal, even though their contribution to Nazi success may have been vital. Nevertheless, the trial itself, conducted, as Neave reminds us, with scrupulous fairness by Sir Geoffrey Lawrence, laid bare the character of the Third Reich and its leadership. The alternatives to the trial would have been palpably unjust and politically catastrophic. Airey Neave has done us the service of rubbing our noses once again in an unpalatable but instructive subject.

Acclaim for IAN McEWAN's THE CEMENT GARDEN

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'One of the most interesting new writers to emerge in the 1970s. He has already created a style and vision of life of his own. *The Cement Garden* is further proof of his remarkable powers.'

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Blake Morrison:

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The Times Literary Supplement

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James Fenton

The Bad News First

Tony Benn, A Critical Biography by RUSSELL LEWIS *Associated Business Press* £5.50

It seems to me likely that, if a devastating critique of Tony Benn is ever written, its author will be of the Left rather than the Right. The explanation is simple – if Benn disappoints the Left, by failing to be the necessary hero, or by succeeding through the creation of expectations which it becomes impossible to meet, the bitterness will be tremendous. There is a strong element of *faute de mieux* in the Left's support for Benn. There is within the Labour Party a deep, and partly irrational, distrust. Nevertheless, there he is, almost but not quite at the top of the tree. He is the single obvious target for whatever disappointments the future may hold.

But, whether or not Benn disappoints his admirers, he is bound to disappoint his enemies. It is difficult to fulfil expectations. It is easy to thwart them. It will be easy, for instance, to fail to introduce a one-party dictatorship. It will be easy not to be a traitor. Russell Lewis, whose 'critical biography' bears the marks of disappointment on every page, suggests in his introduction that 'if this country ever does one day become a member of the Warsaw Pact or Comecon, it will surely be some English public-school socialist who signs the treaty'. We are asked by strong implication to see Benn as a potential Philby. And we are asked to do this on the basis of no evidence of any kind whatsoever at all. The

This English

It's a bit thick when people can't even get their clichés right. Peter de Vries always maintained that the cliché-cocktail tended to be a female idiom ('That's not my picnic', 'Watch your onions', sort of thing), but here we have a husky football reporter and an Atomic Energy Authority troubleshooter making the same endearing slip. A very appropriate dangler follows, plus a misplaced apposition and an incredible headline from a paper laughingly known as the 'Times Educational Supplement'. £3 for the first entry, £2 for others printed. Please paste entries on a postcard.

□ But happily for Norwich, the old master, Martin Peters, pulled another ace out of the bag early on. *The Times* (A. L. Barnes)

□ Dr Lewis, like other AEA men, feels disappointed that opposition to the drilling programme had been so intense. . . . 'We're trying to conduct an experimental programme and we're constantly having the feet cut from beneath us.' *Observer* (D. E. Linnell)

□ A sexual neuter, I don't believe Barrie lusted after any of the boys any more than he lusted for Sylvia. *Simon Blow Radio Times* (E. J. Grunwald)

□ Every day of the year firemen attend many serious fires and every year thousands of people die as a result. *Radio 4* (P. de Weerd)

□ Whose Afraid of the Big Bad Comprehensive? **Headline TES** (I. Hofbauer)

same goes for the picture of Benn as a potential Stalin, Lenin, Enver Hoxha, or what have you.

Russell Lewis is a sloppy author: I was surprised to find myself making a 'merry remark' on page two, at an occasion I never witnessed and about which I have never written. He is a bad writer: 'Gladstone, for instance, had proceeded almost by osmosis from the front bench at the Oxford Union to the government front bench in the House of Commons.' Surely Gladstone was a solid? I quite enjoyed Lewis's nonsense phrase, 'the status quo sine bellum'. But *sine* requires an ablative. There is a pleasant invention: 'The PM was not an especially shrewed judge of character.' But if the word 'shrewed' means henpecked, it is surely inappropriate for Wilson. Lewis himself is not much of a judge of character. Wilson 'surrendered to every pressure provided it was strong enough'. This tells us absolutely nothing: everyone must surrender to pressure providing the pressure is strong enough.

Much time is spent by Lewis in an attempt to make Benn sinister, but the effect is often spoiled by a certain misplaced fairness – there is no point in being fair about details when one's over-all thesis is monstrous. Yet this is Lewis's approach. He thinks Benn's character is exceedingly dangerous, but he cannot help mentioning that the man is happily married, exceedingly nice, pleasant, etcetera. He notes the teetotalism, but has to add that Benn is generous with drink for others. The remark 'he only smokes a pipe' sums up the desperateness of the author: less sinister people than Benn, we are supposed to believe, smoke cigarettes, reefers, hubble-bubbles and pipes, simultaneously for preference.

Here is the Lewis technique at work:

When talking to a national productivity conference [Benn] put forward the arresting idea that by better lubrication throughout industry Britain might save over five to seven years as much as £500m. This was very possibly true, though like many other simple prescriptions for our ills it might amount in the end to just one more form of monomania – mad Mao Tse-tung had the same sort of obsession about pushing forward the Chinese economy by simply insisting that every wheel in China should have a rubber tyre.

Note the stages. First comes the rewritten newspaper cutting. Next the fair remark – 'very possibly true'. Then the desperate attack, as if the old buffer Lewis had suddenly remembered that this was supposed to be a 'critical biography'. So: on the one hand Benn once made a possibly true remark about lubrication, on the other hand he may well be Mao Tse-tung.

This should serve to give a flavour of Lewis's pitiable book, which contains absolutely nothing new about Benn. It has, however, one good story about Lord Chalfont. In 1967 there was a party at the Russian Embassy to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Revolution. Asked what he would have done in October 1917, Lord Chalfont said, 'I would undoubtedly have been a Bolshevik.' So you would have, Alun, so you would have.

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John Keegan

Whole Stunt Napoo

To Win a War: 1918, The Year of Victory by

JOHN TERRAINE *Sidgwick & Jackson* £7.95

Tommy Goes to War by MALCOLM BROWN
Dent £6.95

It's good to have a line from John Terraine again. We have *received no letter from him lately for a long time*. We feared he might have *been admitted to hospital/sick/wounded*, perhaps *not going on well/hoping to be discharged soon/sent down to base*. We have been expecting a *letter/card/telegram to follow at first opportunity* to say that he was *quite well*. But, like Dad, he has been keeping mum, and his friends have been scanning the casualty lists.

Of course it was a false alarm. Here he comes now, swinging down the duckboards in the gloaming from the support line, marching easy, tin hat slung, cap comforter over his ears, Woodbine on, Short Magazine Lee Enfield bright, clean and slightly oiled, 150 rounds of SAA in his pouches, 1 housewife, 1 pair spare braces, 2 pairs socks, 1 pair drawers, 1 vest, 1 blanket stowed in his large pack, 1 knife, fork, spoon, 1 tin bully beef, 1 tin tea and sugar in his haversack, water bottle filled, pull through and oil bottle in the butt recess, identity disc round neck, clasp knife in breast pocket, entrenching tool on left hip (Malcolm Brown has a diagram explaining how all this was arranged on page 77 of his excellent scrapbook of Tommy life). There is mud on his ammunition boots, wet, brown mud, because this is the Salient, not everyone's favourite sector, some people's worst ('Thank God we are leaving the Fifth Army area,' a windy Welsh subaltern blurted out to Siegfried in '17), but the old soldier is at home here. There is dried mud on his puttees, and

on the shoulders of his tunic, where a ration party going up the line has pushed him into the side of the communication trench. And old dirt has worked its way into his medal ribbons, so that one peers to make them out. Can the first be the Star for *Mons* (Batsford, 1960)? Has he been out that long? Yes, he has. Out since August, breaking his boots on the pavé all the way from railhead at Maubeuge to the Condé canal, back again then on the long retreat south through Le Cateau, Guise, St Quentin to the Marne. Winter had found him outside Ypres, glaring balefully across no-man's-land at the German parapet – no Christmas truce for this stern heart – listening for the drone of a Jack Johnson (shells were short, thank God, the winter of '14, little else to feel grateful for), wiggling his toes against the cold, waiting for dark and the rum ration, and the reliefs, if they should come. If not, head over the parapet and sharpened matchsticks under the eyelids. This bit of the line would hold. Haig had said it must.

Haig (Hutchinson, 1963). Now there's a general for you. Doesn't say much. But a gentleman. Married one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting. Proposed first time they met. Went to Sandringham all the time after that. Love at first sight. And *educated*. He understood the war. Knew it couldn't be won in five minutes. Needed thinking about. No good those politicians at home wanting quick results. Look what happened when French tried to finish it off at Loos in September '15. Whole stunt napoo. Right of Haig to tell the King what the army thought of it. And right of the King to get Haig French's job. Because he knew how to tackle *The Western Front* (Hutchinson, 1964). Methodical. Choose your

time. Pick your spot. Then attack and keep on attacking until there are more dead Germans than English. Attrition, that's called. Not as fancy as a breakthrough, but sure. Gets you there in the end. The spot he's always wanted was Ypres, where we'd started off in '14. But the Froggies wouldn't have it. First it had to be the Somme, then Arras. Co-operate with them, that was their idea. All right as long as they did their bit. But when did they? I never saw it. And nasty, dirty trenches they always left. Chucked their hand in altogether in '17. Couldn't stop Haig having his go at Ypres then. *Passchendaele* (Leo Cooper, 1977) the push was called. "Passion Dale" the Lloyd George lot said afterwards when they were trying to get rid of him. But he foxed them. Kept his mouth shut. Even when Lloyd George sacked Wully Robertson, who'd stuck by him through thick and thin, he didn't say a word. He knew where his duty lay. In the top job. Because only he knows how *To Win a War* (Sidgwick and Jackson, 1978). He's got it all worked out. No one else understands – except one or two of us old 'uns. Might take till '19 or '20, but we'll get there in the end. Take these new battles we're fighting now. Let the Germans wear themselves out. Then catch them on the hop. That's Haig's idea. And it'll work. We'll soon be through the Hindenburg Line and you just watch the Kaiser run . . .

There is emotion in the voice. And there are wound stripes on the cuff. The old warrior has suffered for his loyalties – to an England long gone (if it ever really existed), to standards of courage and self-sacrifice no longer observed (if they ever really were), to heroes whose followings have fallen quite away (if they were ever as large as he thinks they ought to have been). John Terraine is the Enoch Powell of British military historians, not only deeply patriotic but fiercely nationalist and unashamedly imperialist, dedicated to a belief in the military unity of the British Empire, convinced still of the rightness of the decisions of August 1914, morbidly suspicious of alliances and allies, whether they are Frenchmen trying to fight to the last Tommy or Americans *brashly usurping his place in the victory parade*, endlessly contemptuous of liberal politicians, of whatever party, who fail to understand the harshness of life and the inevitability of struggle, totally unmoved by modern distaste for the upstairs-downstairs world of hierarchy and obedience in which he seems to feel so much at home.

Like Enoch Powell, he has been castigated by his peers for holding the views he does. Robert Kee, in a famous review in the *Spectator* in 1963, accused him of 'refusing to hear anything against Haig, indeed anything against the first world war itself', and it is true that he does at times both anthropomorphise the war and identify with it in a peculiarly personal way. *To Win a War* contains the remarkable sentence, 'The Eleventh Battle of the Isonzo stands out as perhaps the most dreadful example of blind attrition in a war which has been blamed, sometimes unjustly, for that unlovely practice.' Other critics have been blunter. They have accused him of an unseemly insensitivity to the sufferings of the ordinary soldiers and a crassly geopolitical approach to strategy and international affairs.

Perhaps, as for the BEF in August 1918, the tide is now beginning to turn for him. For there is something almost noble in his dedication to that hideously unattractive group, the British generals of the first world war, whose

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diaries reveal hearts as flintlike as the textures of their faces. There is something heroic in his obvious willingness to have died carrying out their orders. And there is a great deal of scholarship and literary skill in the effort he brings to transmit his strange, astigmatic and entirely individual vision of the most tragic passage in British history. With *To Win a War* he completes an enterprise begun 18 years ago. With it, let us hope, the demon which has driven him is laid to rest. It is good to be reminded that our feelings about war were not necessarily those of our grandfathers. It is not good to be told that they were right and we are wrong.

Zahir Jamal

Rooting

Song of Solomon by TONI MORRISON Chatto £5.95

The Battle Lost and Won by OLIVIA MANNING Weidenfeld £4.95

Farewell from Nowhere by VLADIMIR MAXIMOV Collins/Harvill £6.50

'How come a nigger can't be a egg,' demands Toni Morrison's city black of his fellow, Guitar – 'he can be a egg if he wants to?' There were liberals in the Kennedy era who might have hastened to agree; among so many assurances, what harm in an egg? Most American Negroes, however, would probably recognise a certain bleak accuracy in Guitar's reply:

Nope. Can't be no egg. It ain't in him. Something about his genes. His genes won't let him be no egg however hard he tries. Nature says no. 'No, you can't be no egg, nigger. Now, you can be a crow if you wanna. Or a big baboon. But not no egg. Eggs is difficult, complicated, fragile too. And white.'

Ordeals of black consciousness, encouraged by the spurious tributes of white shame, tend to result in a literature of clamorous separatism. Toni Morrison's themes – the cracking of an affluent Negro's cultural shell and his painful awakening to self-definition – might, with fatal ease, have toppled into ethnic humbug. So it's highly pleasing to find them treated in a fable that eschews both stridency and false sentiment for a sense of history opening on the here-and-now.

Raised to fear his wealthy dad's power, to despise his mother and sisters and to prize the white man's bounty, Macon Dead Jr threatens to become, in the words of Guitar, 'a very strange Negro indeed'. From his situation in the bleaching pot, of course, it's other blacks who seem strange; Pilate, his oddball aunt, screened-off and self-reliant, whose ramshackle ghetto home could have been transported from the shanty towns around Accra; Hagar, her sinewy grand-daughter, who shares her bed with him for years without obligation but insists on trying to kill him when he quits it; Guitar, his boyhood ally, wise in the ways of the street and insanely sworn to murder the whites who cruise it; First Corinthians and Magdalene, his silent, watchful sisters, whose uncomplaining ways, he belatedly learns, mask a smouldering con-

tempt for his lordly airs; and, enveloping him like a pall, his parents' loveless marriage, deepest of the riddles that everywhere return his alien gaze.

Fittingly, our reluctant zombie's discovery of how he became Dead to his people entails some life-renewing research into their manner of giving names. For the shades who walk beneath the label 'black', this narrative wants to sing it out, have *names*. 'Names they got from yearnings, gestures, flaws, events, mistakes and weaknesses. Names that bore witness.' Yet what sets him off on a rehabilitating trek from North Carolina to Virginia isn't, happily, a quaint wish to prospect for roots. It's gold supposedly buried among the ancestral bones that lures him, still his father's son, to a reckoning with the family's ghosts and the assassin who knows him like a brother. Toni Morrison has managed, with remarkable imaginative address, to reconcile the compressed significance of folk-song and spiritual with the responsive particularity of dramatic history. It's an accomplishment which inevitably invites comparison with Ralph Ellison's pioneering tale of black self-estrangement, *Invisible Man*; but Toni Morrison's painful advantage shows clearly in her handling, from mute suffering to full-throated outrage, of the unseen miseries of the daughters of the tribe.

The second volume in Ms Manning's 'Levant Trilogy' seems likely to form one of the duller chapters in that meta-novel she began assembling in the Balkan stories. Situated, like its predecessor, in Cairo, the narrative contrasts the bloodiness of Alamein with the nervy boredom of the British sundowner set. Watching Manning's lucid prose squander itself on the nightclub patter, personal intrigues and marital beefs of a coterie including numerous veterans of her previous fictions suggests that, in some larger scheme, this would be where the story paused to tidy up loose ends. Despite claims to stand 'in its own right', this novel is strictly for its author's regulars. Casual callers are unlikely to be greatly affected by the intelligence that 'dis-satisfaction – chiefly Harriet's – was eroding

the Pringles' marriage'. What a satisfied Pringle marriage looked like, the yarn offers no clue. Similarly, Angela Hooper's determined carryings-on with the revolting Cast-lebar, partly a response to the loss of her young son, seem entirely without depth a book away from the corpse. It would certainly require larger resources of ironic portraiture than Manning has yet shown to imbue cock-tails at the Anglo-Egyptian Union with any allure. And so while an undeniably high competence shows clearly through accounts of the desert battle, reminders of the debilitating price of national glory appear as sentimental irrelevancies when preached over casualties without fictional stuffing from the start.

Disturbingly low on stuffing is Vladimir Maximov's melancholy *picaro* whose formless wanderings across Russia plaintively image his Jewish creator's grief in exile. Fleeing the moral poverty of his parents' Moscow home, Vlad Samsonov joins that impermanent company of young drifters who take their chances on the nation's railroad. Out of a landscape blurry with running figures and meagre relationships, the narrative fitfully snatches powerful moments of remembrance; and Michael Glenny's translation copes superbly with the recollected textures of Vlad's boyhood sorties with his grandfather. But for all Maximov's abundant descriptive strength, his storyteller's imaginative composure remains desperately fragile; and, times past count, the narration helplessly thrusts its protagonist aside to offer lachrymose valedictions, such as this to a young harlot:

Farewell little fallen Thumbelina of Tashkent! He will knock around the world for a long time, blown hither and hither by the four winds of heaven, racing around in the squirrel-cage of everyday banality, before he will sit down at a desk and remember you; but once remembered, he will never be able to dislodge you from his mind, his life, his fate.

The lasting hurt of exile, these violations assert, is an imagination beggared in the cause of memory.

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ART BOOKS

John Spurling

The End of the Imaginary

'The interrogation of 19th-century painting' – to which Robert L. Delevoy refers in his introduction to *Symbolists and Symbolism* (translated by Barbara Bray and others, Skira/Macmillan £30) – continues apace. The late Gaëtan Picon in *The Birth of Modern Painting* (Skira/Macmillan £15) reasserts the generally accepted view that the *Salon des Refusés* of 1863 and especially its prime exhibit, Manet's *Le Dejeuner sur l'Herbe*, marked a watershed:

It was the end of the imaginary, of everything belonging to collective memory and reverie; the end of models which the individual does not meet in real life but which he can reconstruct, bring to life: legends and myths, great actions and historical figures, ideal representations of beauty, ideal objects of desire . . . From this year 1863 onwards the history of painting was to be essentially the history of a mode of perception and not of an imagined world.

To read Picon, a smooth and authoritative rationalist in the best French manner, is to be convinced afresh that we have not been wrong all these years: in 1863 Delacroix died, Ingres finished his last painting and Manet and his men definitively declared the new era open. Constable and Turner had indeed already glimpsed it but the English, incorrigible individualists and distrusters of the contemporary world, failed to exploit their discovery. 'The thing was to rediscover the sense of sight': the difference between Manet's group and other opponents of academicism such as the pre-Raphaelites was that the former wanted to see a world that was wholly new, whereas the latter wanted one that had been lost. Manet's group tampered with Renaissance perspective, brought the background into the foreground, demoted the frame, separated the colours, removed the 'finish' and emphasised the brush-strokes (so that what the spectator saw at a distance was not the same as what he saw close to). The effect was to progress from an art which celebrated, remembered, symbolised, represented the past to one which caught, in the very moment of its being seen, 'a present which has no meaning beyond itself, which is simply there'.

But if Cubism, abstraction and action painting are direct consequences of the *Salon des Refusés*, 'symbolist or surrealist painting,' says Picon, 'appears as a marginal force, a force of opposition'. It is this increasingly restive opposition which, in a series of international exhibitions since the early 1960s, has been conducting Delevoy's 'interrogation'. In an ambitious book called *Beyond Time and Place* (translated by J.A. Underwood, Oxford £22), Philippe Roberts-Jones attempts a grand survey of 19th-century non-realist art. Beginning with Goya, Fuseli and Blake, taking in Friedrich, Martin, Böcklin, Rossetti, he fetches up at Redon, Burne-Jones (Frances Spalding's *Magnificent Dreams*, Phaidon £5.95, deals usefully and more specifically with this artist and other late Victorians), Ensor, Munch, Klimt, Van Gogh and Rousseau (well illus-

trated in Ronald Alley's *Portrait of a Primitive*, Phaidon £5.95, but treated in rather too schoolroom a fashion, with too little discrimination between his astonishing 'dream' paintings and his decidedly ludicrous portraits). Even Turner and Whistler make their appearance in Roberts-Jones's compendium and it is certainly refreshing to re-approach these honorary impressionists as painters of the imaginary – Turner for his sea-monsters, natural catastrophes and mythical dramas, Whistler for his *Nocturnes* ('when the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry' and 'Fairland is before us'). But the inclusion of Monet for his water-lilies – on the grounds that his 'aquatic visions reveal an expanding universe whose elements obey secret laws, just as the mind that gives itself over to imagination is free of the logic of cause and effect' – seems to be pushing it. Indeed the book founders in its multifariousness. Hampered by a stony prose-style (unless it is the translator's) Roberts-Jones spends much of his invention in making brisk links between one artist and another. Thus 'Giovanni Segantini . . . went beyond Symbolist appearances to illustrate a certain kind of non-realism. It was the same with the Dutchman Jan Toorop'. The advantage of the book should be to allow the reader to wander at will, to discover unfamiliar work and make unfamiliar connections, to see the 19th century with the dazzling light of 1863 switched off. Unfortunately the illustrations, though numerous, are mostly too small and dark.

Delevoy's own interrogation gains from concentrating on one area of Roberts-Jones's survey and from its much superior illustrations. The author, like Roberts-Jones a Belgian, is an altogether more expansive and pretentious (though somewhat glutinous) writer and he prints symbolist poems as well as extended extracts from the Symbolist Manifesto, reviews and artists' statements. The large-format book amounts almost to an exhibition between covers, one chapter being devoted wholly to illustrations and quoted texts without the author's interventions. But

Among this week's contributors:

GEOFFREY GRIGSON's most recent collection of poems, *The Fiesta*, was published in September this year.

A. J. NICHOLLS is a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford. He is co-author with the late Sir John Wheeler-Bennett of *The Semblance of Peace: The Political Settlement After the Second World War*.

JOHN KEEGAN is the author of *The Face of Battle*. He is Senior Lecturer in War Studies at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

A collection of Mark Boxer's cartoons, *The Times We Live In*, has just been published by Cape.

CHRISTOPHER REID's first collection of poems, *Arcadia*, will appear next year.

WILLIAM FEAVER is the art critic of the *Observer*.

in spite of the adherence of several outstanding artists – Munch, Klimt, Gauguin, Redon and Whistler again – this branch of the opposition has more the air of an elderly government in exile than a shadow cabinet. The older Symbolists, such as Puvis de Chavannes, Moreau and Böcklin, have the aristocratic lassitude of *ci-devant* academicians while the younger ones, such as Khnopff, Klinger and Stuck, have the repressed, lumpish energy of those who cannot free themselves from the authority of the past but long to do violence to somebody. What are their symbols in the end but artificial barriers to the mind, contrivances to imprison the imagination rather than free it, means for peeping at sex and death so as not to encounter them directly? This is not to deny their importance in the history of the 19th century or even, through their influence on the surrealists, in the 20th, yet it is emphatically to reject them as anything more than the dying spasm of a discredited academic tradition.

But of course, as Whistler proves, it was quite possible for an artist to have a foot in most camps. He was able to show his work at the Royal Academy, paint fashionable portraits, be identified with the pre-Raphaelites, learn *plein air* painting from Courbet, borrow like Degas from Japanese prints, share with Manet the chief notoriety of the *Salon des Refusés* (for the *White Girl*), introduce Impressionism to England, be counted a Symbolist and anticipate 20th-century abstraction. Whistler was a remarkable man and an important figure in the history of art, a bee collecting pollen and distributing it in all directions, but his own paintings seem rather muted now. Hilary Taylor, in a fine, careful study (*James McNeill Whistler*, Studio Vista £15) considers that his work 'reflects power of intellect and depth of purpose, a sensitivity to natural form and a lucid control of materials which was the supreme outcome of a life of research and analysis'. She is successful in rescuing Whistler as a serious artist from his colourful career as a public personality, but she is less concerned with what comes out of the paintings than with what Whistler put into them. Sensitivity and control are at once his strengths and his limitations.

The real fusion of the two main currents of 19th-century painting – the subjective dream and the new mode of perception – occurs in the work of Gauguin and Van Gogh, those uncomfortable fellow-lodgers in Arles. Jean Leymarie, whose succinct and magnificently illustrated account of Van Gogh has now been published for the first time in this country (translated by James Emmons, Skira/Macmillan £20) reproduces side by side Van Gogh's paintings of their two chairs: Gauguin's curvaceous red and green armchair with two novels and a lighted candle on the seat, his own four-square yellow chair with an abandoned pipe and a small pile of tobacco. They were only two months together before their quarrel and the ear-slashing incident sent Gauguin ('at heart a calculating egoist', says Leymarie rather unfairly, since who wouldn't have been in the close company of Van Gogh?) scurrying back to Paris. It always comes as a surprise to be reminded how packed Van Gogh's life was, how brief and explosive its developments from the dark Millet-influenced northern peasant scenes of the early 1880s to the crackling Provençal sunflowers and blazing *Starry Night* of 1888 and 1889 and the last *Wheatfield with Crows*

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just before his suicide at Auvers in 1890 at the age of 37. Even now, when his work has become so over-familiar, Van Gogh makes 'interrogation' seem a puny response to art, yet Picon is right all the same. Without the new mode of perception the full fury of Van Gogh's imagination could never have been released.

Mark Boxer

Noah's Art

Ronald Searle by RONALD SEARLE *Deutsch*
£14.50

Distortion is the basic weapon of the cartoonist and sometimes becomes his prison. In his youth, Ronald Searle drew standard endomorphs until he experienced the horrors of a Japanese PoW camp. The effect on him was clearly profound: he managed to transfer the black horror of prison life into the black humour of St Trinian's; at the same time he elongated and starved his figures as drastically as Giacometti. In his latest collection this process has clearly accelerated. His line has become as tortured as over-wrought iron; so much so that his drawings of Japanese camp life seem curiously serene in comparison.

How Searle draws is now more important than what he draws. The Swiss dramatist Dürrenmatt said in the Fifties that 'cartoonists like Searle are more important because of their ideas; their quality as draughtsmen takes second place'. Searle's friend, Henning Bock, points out in his sympathetic introduction that it would be difficult to hold the same view today. He also tells us that 'Searle is no longer interested in mocking individuals'. This is sad news. His subjects now tend to be cosmic: 'Pollution' is a mass of swaddled babies strewn like shells on a shore line; 'The Arrival of God' is a chunk of the moon (or is it a new Henry Moore from the Marlborough?) receiving homage in a New York street. 'Everyman' is Searle's sepulchral businessman trying on animal masks in front of a mirror and settling for the face of a crocodile. In fact animals seem to have taken over Searle's world: cats swing in hammocks or play instruments, dogs dream, birds perform, foxes take to the saddle.

If this sounds a little like Gloucester in *King Lear*, there is something apocalyptic about many of the new drawings. Searle's distaste for the human race is perhaps unconsciously expressed in the drawing of a man disappearing into a carpet as if it were quicksand. On the opposite page a pair of truncated feet stand outside a hotel bedroom door. A few drawings are wryly nostalgic. A typical plate – we are in the realms of fine art – is entitled, 'Whatever happened to the Romanoffs?' Two Christopher Fry-like figures in full regalia dance in a conservatory. The drawing is beautifully done. In the corner a dog plays a violin. Why a dog? Is it unfair to suggest there is no better reason than that Searle quite likes to draw dogs?

Some years ago Searle rejected Grub Street and hit the Gauguin trail. Today he lives, as Henning Bock informs us, in sight of

Cézanne's mountain: his work appears mainly in art galleries with names like Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz and his ink-stained handkerchief ('used between 1965 and 1970') is exhibited in 'a showcase of essential documents associated with the artist' at the Bibliothèque Nationale. Searle is a draughtsman of great talent and a colourist of elegance, and there are certainly some nice things in this relatively lavish collection – not least some straight drawings of Hamburg tarts unadorned by Searle's standard line in arabesques; also several illustrations probably done for *New Yorker* covers (they are unacknowledged but have the tell-tale strip down the left hand margin). Yet sadly Searle has forsaken being funny for being 'meaningful'.

The trouble is that Searle draws a stereotyped world which he hasn't looked at properly for a long time; he is busy putting the curlicues of a bored cake-decorator on a world that has already crumbled. His standard businessman belongs to the pre-war world of Marquand; Hollywood has updated its prototypes better than he has. The inward-looking Provençal studio is probably a mistake. The obvious parallel is Steinberg, who never quite abandons New York. (He is luckier than Searle in having the *New Yorker* on his doorstep.) Steinberg's drawings can certainly be otiose; but his famous *New Yorker* cover showing how New York 'sees' the rest of America as an allotment beyond Tenth Avenue is on a level of accurate perception that Searle, with all his talents, seldom reaches. Searle's work over the last ten years makes rather bleak viewing, often rendered trivial by being pretty, his symbol of merit a blancmange rising sun. Although a cartoonist can be exasperated by man, he should still be amused and intrigued by him. Animals may be nicer, but, as Noah must have discovered, they are duller in the long run.

Peter Conrad

Phizmonger

The World of William Hogarth by WILLIAM GAUNT *Cape* £4.95

Critics who invoke the artist's 'world' in their titles generally do so because, having nothing much to say about the artist in question, they can then gaze absent-mindedly out of the window at the passers-by. The critic fancies he is understanding the world: actually he is only admiring the view. William Gaunt wishes the same garrulous extroversion on Hogarth, sending him into the 'panorama' of the London streets where 'art could learn direct from nature'. The presumption that Hogarth's art is anecdotal and adjectival – learning from nature, replicating his surroundings – is the sad disability of Gaunt's book. Hogarth's images are not stray snapshots of the festive affray in the streets. As Ronald Paulson's study has shown, they are ironic and introverted formal puzzles, cannibalising their own pictorial past. Hoping to inflate Hogarth into 'the critic and the mighty historian of his age', Gaunt actually diminishes him into a phiz-mongering journalist.

Lichtenberg's commentaries on Hogarth's engravings, published between 1784 and 1796, unriddle the scenes metaphysically, aggrandising the harlot and the rake as life-spirits condemned to careers of degeneration, and defending Hogarth as a 'painter of souls', not an opportunistic observer. Paulson's intuition of what he calls 'complicating detail' is as ingenious as Lichtenberg's; but whereas for Lichtenberg the patterns Hogarth makes are aureoles of spiritual uncertainty, working to exonerate the characters, for Paulson they are iconographic and structural traps, conspiring to accuse the characters. Every painting on a wall, every scrap of litter, is emblematic testimony. Hogarth's harlot in Lichtenberg's interpretation is the victim of a vitalistic tragedy: her energy and instinct sour and putrefy in her progress through the world. Paulson's harlot is the victim of a structural tragedy. She is poised between private recollection (not Gaunt's chatty social observation, but psychological memory) and public conscience – in part she is an avatar of Hogarth's father, the provincial duped and persecuted by London sharpers, in part a casualty of the hierarchical pretensions Gay derided in the double plot of *The Beggar's Opera*. But for Gaunt she is an ephemerally topical trollop from a gossip column, and his meagre critical delight consists in recognising old friends. The libertine in the first scene is identified as Lord Charteris, the bawd as 'Mother' Needham, the magistrate as John Gonson. For Gaunt the pleasure of decipherment and detection, pursued sentimentally by Lichtenberg and learnedly by Paulson, has relaxed into the safer enjoyment of social acquaintanceship.

As Paulson's patristic glosses show, the paintings in Hogarth's prints are moral commentaries, not casual décor. The Jewish collector who acquires Moll Hackabout and punishes her truancy lives surrounded by scenes of the retributive Old Testament justice he embodies. The networks of implications hinted at by Lichtenberg and decoded by Paulson turn Hogarth's glum satire into a subtler, more devious irony: each scene is a prison of allusive complexity apt to trip up its inhabitants.

As in Sterne's novels, characters are undone by associations of ideas. So introverted is Hogarth's art that paintings become characters and combatants. On the ticket of admission he designed for the *Marriage à la Mode* auction, a regiment of classical canvases imperiously assaults Hogarth's unrespectable modern histories, which pugnaciously fight back. Of this formal intricacy, Gaunt's Hogarth is innocent. In self-justification, Gaunt argues that Hogarth believed 'the way to become a painter was by looking'. But often it is other paintings that Hogarth looks at; and looking is not neutral observation but an analytic adventure, in which the eye is wantonly teased and tricked by the involuted lines of natural beauty.

Imperceptive about Hogarth, Gaunt is uninteresting about his 'world' (by which he means 18th-century London). He favours the formula 'age of transition', which has the expedient virtue of licensing any generalisation. But the generalisations it sponsors are always wearily self-evident, and Gaunt's language flags under their burden. 'That architecture should be based on that of the ancient classical world had been generally accepted in Europe since the Renaissance period,' he explains. Elsewhere he discloses that the 'ten-

dency [of artists] to travel was a feature of the age'. The age, it seems, is constituted of clichés.

Gaunt's lackadaisical generality infects Hogarth. Discussing the conversation pieces, Gaunt ruefully announces that 'to paint a family group or a group of familiars engaged in their usual occupations or amusements was not exactly a new idea'. He hasn't the energy to show how Hogarth renewed it by turning it ironically inside out, painting groups formally convened in conversation but actually isolated in illusion or pretence: the collapsible domestic games of the *Children's Party* or the *House*

of *Cards*; the Cholmondeley family, half of which is posing with rigid hauteur while the other half is frolicking over the furniture; the child actors performing Dryden's *Conquest of Mexico* for a royal audience which is more concerned with its own intrigues and accidents than with the action on stage.

Gaunt's book ends by subsiding into the likeness of the Hogarth scenes which he thinks of as mere urban rambles: its epilogue wanders off irrelevantly to visit Burlington's villa at Chiswick and Hogarth's house on the road to Heathrow. The critic is cashiered as a tour-guide.

William Feaver

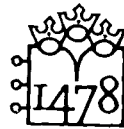
Oh, My Mind

Rembrandt's House: The World of the Great Master by ANTHONY BAILEY Dent £7.95

Rembrandt Studies are largely concerned with attributions and dating. It's a thriving little industry with scholarly reputations at stake and market values at risk every time a pronouncement is made. There are tense moments. Soon, for instance, a team of Dutch specialists is expected to publish the results of a prolonged check on all the 600-or-so paintings said, on previously good authority, to be genuine Rembrandts. Rumour has it that at

least a third will be downgraded. Few other experts, of course, will be prepared to accept these findings as conclusive. In printroom, bookstack and gallery store – wherever Rembrandtites gather to compare notes – tempers will flare.

Anthony Bailey isn't one of these devoted scholars. He's the forever-eager amateur, keen on getting the gist rather than achieving incontestability. Besides, he identifies too closely. In his breathless account of life and times in Rembrandt's Amsterdam he makes a point of slipping casually from era to era. One



1978 Oxford University Press

Beyond Time and Place

Non-Realist Painting in the Nineteenth Century
Philippe Roberts-Jones

In this book the author identifies, describes, and illustrates a tradition of nineteenth-century painting which, he writes, was 'a deep current running right through the century that had its source in the strange, the imaginary, and the fantastic'. Nature and its horizons, the individual and his depths, sleep and its empire, the elsewhere or the beyond, woman and her faces, light and shade: these recurrent themes are traced from Goya, Blake, and Fuseli through many less obvious figures in the world of nineteenth-century art to Whistler, Munch, and Klimt. Illustrated £22

Images from the Floating World

The Japanese Print, including an Illustrated Dictionary of Ukiyo-e
Richard Lane

This strikingly illustrated book introduces the general reader to the art of the Japanese paintings and prints categorized as Ukiyo-e, and also provides an illustrated dictionary of 400 Ukiyo-e works which will be of especial interest to the collector and would-be collector. Dr Lane's text and skilfully chosen illustrations trace the development of these pictures from their beginnings in the seventeenth century up to the moment when the world-wide influence of Hokusai and Hiroshige in the mid-nineteenth century was succeeded by the irruption of Western influence. Illustrated £30

moment he is talking about the Metro builders near Rembrandt's house in the Breestraat and the next he brings the discussion round to 17th-century house-repairs. He has a lunch-time snack of French loaf and Edam cheese and, chewing thoughtfully, feels

for a moment that history is not a linear progression from A to Z, on which route I somewhere am, but that it is circular, circuitous and possibly concentric. Rembrandt lives round the corner.

The quest for Rembrandt involves several near-misses. Bailey spots him sitting over a Heineken in a cafe, but before he can accost him the chap pulls on his anorak and leaves. An elusive fellow, this Great Master. Virtually nothing that he said or did got left on record. True, there was the inventory when he went bankrupt in 1656. Wills and other legal documents provide further details. But repeatedly the investigator is obliged to circle around, deftly filling in background (Sephardic Jews, tulip cults, medical matters, Van Tromp, Spinoza, studio practice) and leaving the artist blank.

What about the paintings, drawings and etchings? Good point. They come in useful as illustrations and as nests of information. With them to hand, Rembrandt's country strolls can be re-enacted. Pity about the housing estates. Portraits of Saskia his wife, Titus his son and Hendrickje his devoted companion are a useful basis for character-studies. Every little helps. All the same there is a suspicion that, despite his love of the works, our author is more at ease with secondary, non-pictorial sources. Every now and again he has a go at art-analysis. But it's with relief that he leads the reader back on to the firmer ground of socio-political infill.

Anthony Bailey attends morning service at the English Reformed Church. He has no religion: Rembrandt was a believer. The gap must be bridged.

Belief is less difficult on a May Sunday morning in such a place. Sunlight – music – flowers – voices – the human body – minute distillations of talent, beauty, and history; and the mind, my mind, meandering not so much in a state of grace as of gratefulness . . .

My mind, meandering somewhat, sets to work thinking of antecedents for the Bailey approach. Henty? Not exactly. Priestley? Not quite. . . . Got it! J. M. Morton, he who wrote *In the Steps of the Master*, one man's account of the Holy Land Then and Now (or, rather, in Palestine days), lavishly illustrated in sepia gravure and crammed with personal reactions and lively titbits from ancient history. Recently I came across a photograph of Mr Morton out on another footsteps exercise, this time somewhere in the North Sea. He was seated among the dying fish on the deck of a trawler, his typewriter on his knee, a story in the making. I like to imagine Mr Bailey similarly occupied, scanning the morning papers

for the latest on Rembrandt, pursuing his idol along the waterways of old Amsterdam, bumping into Van der Valk, the Dutch detective played by Barry Foster, off on another case.

Christopher Reid

Saying Himself

Stanley Spencer at War by RICHARD CARLINE
Faber £9.50

The legend of the huge quantity of written material that Stanley Spencer left behind him at his death – a treasure trove 'contained in two large packing cases and a wooden trunk on castors' – is one of the most tantalising in modern times. To be sure, over the years we have been allowed glimpses of this remarkable legacy. Maurice Collis, Spencer's first biographer, unable, it would seem, to decide whether this was a real treasure or simply a great white elephant, quoted somewhat parsimoniously from the letters, annotations and biographical jottings to be found there. He chose well, but not, I think, lavishly enough. What we have been waiting for is an editor willing to set aside personal fastidiousness about bad spelling and grammar, prolixity, incoherence, etc, and buckle down to the task of putting these papers in order.

Stanley Spencer at War is not an answer to this, but it does have distinct merits. Written by Spencer's brother-in-law, Richard Carline – the trustees are very chary of letting their hoard fall into the hands of roving pirates – it consists of generous quotation from the writings, linked by a narrative that is discreet and modest, but firmly controlled. The book covers the period from Spencer's late childhood and artistic education, through his war-service, to the completion of his work on the Sandham Memorial Chapel at Burghclere. Finally, there is an epilogue dealing with Spencer's separation from his first wife, Hilda: this is described with great tact by her brother, and we find here none of the acrimony that marred the memoirs of Spencer's second wife, Patricia Preece.

Mr Carline's book is distinguished by a seriousness rare in the literature about this artist. It shows Spencer to be considerably more than the naïve dwarf, the by-word for pariah dottiness, the monster of bizarre sexual appetite, that we have read about in certain biographical studies. (In a recent radio piece Donald Pleasence played him as a sort of demented hobbit.) It reveals a mind of exceptional liveliness, wit and curiosity, with powers of metaphorical invention that we might more

readily expect from a writer than a painter.

A gift for Biblical metaphor, and the ability to place any testament story in the context of his own dearly-beloved Cookham, are among the most striking characteristics of Spencer's painted work. He had the Blakeian knack of seeing angels, but his angels are not of Blake's airy kind; Spencer was more knowing than that. Thinking of an event in his childhood, he rejoiced in the happy mistake by which he believed that the family maid, talking through her thin attic wall to the girl next door, was deep in conversation with an angel. The high garden walls of Cookham gave him licence to imagine what lay behind them, and even in later years, when the new buses enabled him to see over, he held stubbornly to his old intuitions. 'What overjoyed', he wrote,

was that when I got down from the bus and walked along by the same wall, I found that my previous supposition was true and I could still enjoy my feeling of wonder at what was on the other side.

If this desire to have the best of two worlds seems wilfully childish – and there is a lot of childishness in Spencer's writing, where he speaks with such force of his loves and his wants – then it is also a key to the two mature masterpieces discussed in this book, the Cookham *Resurrection* and the series of murals at Burghclere. For Spencer, resurrection meant a return to home ground – that is to say, everyday life and landscape, sanctified by renewed attention. The resurrected in his pictures stand as metaphors for the artist himself. Writing of a group in the Cookham picture, Spencer points out:

By the ivy-covered church tower, a wife brushes the earth and grass off her husband . . . Another woman buttons a man's coat up and another straightens a man's collar. Further down you see Hilda smelling a flower . . . She wonders about its scent and with curiosity pushes it against her face.

All these things, small acts of care and attentiveness, are in effect metaphors for the business of this particular painter.

A major theme of this book is, inevitably, Spencer's religious imagination. Although at one time or another interested in the Catholic faith and even in Christian Science, he was too unorthodox to be drawn one way or the other. Ultimately, it would seem that God Himself was just another metaphor for the artist's creative impulse. He speaks of God 'making man in his own image and thus saying Himself over and over again'; and we remember how Spencer put *himself* again and again into his pictures, sometimes twice or three times on the same canvas. In one exuberant passage, from a letter to Hilda, we read:

I think of light as being the holy presence, the substance of God, so that everything is in and part of that substance . . . I think all shapes and forms so love the fact of light that . . . in this way light influences and suggests to form what shape it should be . . . All the varying forms in my 'pic' make a most comfortable chair for light . . .

Here we have an identification of God with light such as only a painter could make. It is also typical of Spencer's idiosyncratic statements about his religious faith – really a faith in painting. 'If I see a man putting a bivouac up beautifully', he wrote, 'I want to do it myself. And when I read of Christ raising the dead, I want to raise the dead myself.' We should be thankful that such passages, which really do illuminate the pictures, have at long last been resurrected from the lumber-room.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Benedict Nightingale

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It would be easy to exaggerate the change that has occurred in Tom Stoppard's work since, poor soul, he turned 40 last year. Once (it might be claimed) he was an intellectual roué, whose idea of the good life was to roister until dawn with a set of congenial abstractions; and now here he is in a neat grey suit, eschewing the neo-platonic fleshpots for the committee room and the working party, where he can grapple with the social and political issues of our time. In fact, duty has called me to review few plays as topical and responsible as Stoppard's *Jumpers*, which asked whether it was possible to sustain a belief in mental absolutes in the age of the behaviourist and logical positivist; and to call it and the equally ebullient *Travesties* 'nursery games', as an enthusiasm for *Night and Day* has impelled at least one of my more up-market colleagues to do, seems to me little short of outrageous. Stoppard was always serious, very serious, frolic and fandango though he might. On the other hand, his recent work has perhaps become more socially specific and, in the case of *Professional Foul* and *Night and Day*, rather more sober in tone and mood. The theatrical junket, if not exactly over, has evidently entered a new and more earnest phase. The champagne is running a bit low, and coffee is available upstairs.

Every Good Boy Deserves Favour is about the misuse of psychiatry in the Soviet Union; the excellent *Professional Foul* about the abuse of human rights in Czechoslovakia; and *Night and Day* about the freedom of the press and alleged threats thereto. The place is Kambawe, a one-party, one-paper nation on the edge of civil war. Among the journalists who have jetted south in search of catastrophe are two from the *London Globe*, a news-sheet whose constituency would seem to lie somewhere between the *Observer* and the *Sunday Express*, but which, if we're to judge by a mischievous parody of that journal's obsession with factual detail, is not the *Sunday Times*. One of the sleuths is Wagner, a hardened hack from head-office who also happens to be a power in its NUJ chapel. The other is Milne, ousted from a reporter's job in Grimsby because of his resistance to the closed shop, and now pounding an anonymous beat in Africa. To Wagner, who had known nothing of his surreptitious employment by the *Globe*, he is simply 'the Grimsby scab', all the more objectionable because he has scooped him in his own paper with an interview with the rebel leader. If possible, he must be professionally destroyed.

Add a photographer who has shot his way through Vietnam, an expatriate lady who was hounded by the Fleet Street pack when she ran off with her colonial husband, and the despotic president of strife-riven Kambawe,

and there is a quorum in Stoppard's forum. The argument begins. To what extent is a 'free' press 'a million packets of journalism manufactured every week by businessmen using journalists for their labour', and to what extent 'the last line of defence for all the other freedoms', meaning those missing in Russia, Czechoslovakia and Kambawe? Is it better for the journalist if his job prospects are determined by a random spread of proprietors, or by a strong and monopolist union? Which way is better for the public? And how well and badly do newspapers use their supposed freedom in practice?

If you've got a free press everything is correctable, and without it everything is conceivable... I'm with you on the free press; it's the newspapers I can't stand... junk journalism is the evidence of a society that has got at least one thing right, that there should be nobody with the power to dictate where responsible journalism begins... you'd better be damn careful not to cross your fellow-journalists because they could stop you working for any newspaper in the land, and they are answerable to nobody... I'm not talking about protecting my job but my freedom to report facts not congenial to an English millionaire... information, in itself, about anything, is light.

By the end there's little, perhaps too little, doubt where Stoppard stands on issues that may be more ticklish and equivocal than he allows. He is adamantly against the closed shop in journalism. He prefers laissez-faire and free-for-all to the risk of workers' representation. Information is light, and, if anyone is going to throw the switch and plunge us into blackness, it is an imperialist NUJ.

I have several worries about this fretful plaint, the first that it is panicky, a bit paranoid and, given the realities of power in Britain, almost certainly misdirected. At any rate, there seems to me a long, long distance between a union's attempts to maximise the muscles which will obtain its members more security and better pay and a Stoppardesque hell in which leader-writers are being compulsorily drilled from El Vino's to Printing House Square by vindictive Trots and theatre critics who annoy officials of the WRP sent to be re-educated behind barbed wire in the National Theatre car-parks. My other anxieties, however, are dramatic. Stoppard should perhaps be more satisfied with a plot that, as it happens, makes his case rather neatly. But it isn't enough for him that Wagner should protest to the father of his chapel about Milne's employment and that his message should provoke a strike and shut-down just as he himself is about to telex the scoop of his career, an interview with the local Amin. Nor is it enough that his hypocrisy and journalistic rapacity should lead more or less directly to Milne's death. The characters must be discussing and debating, preaching and conceptualising, sometimes quite inappropriately. The exiled wife, Ruth, begins and ends with some swingeing and indiscriminate

contempt for Fleet Street, yet it is she who puts forward a subtle and sophisticated defence of proprietor power ('you are confusing freedom with ability') while president is waiting to confront rebel chief in her family parlour. 'I'm sorry I talked so much,' says Milne after delivering his own pet lecture: it sounds very like his author's apology.

Perhaps this doesn't matter too greatly, given the intrinsic interest of much of the talk. Perhaps it is sufficient answer for Stoppard to cite the precedent of Shaw, who liked to generalise, and at length, on the basis of less human evidence than we have here. But *Misalliance*, *Getting Married* and the like are stylised from the start, and *Night and Day* is the most naturalistic piece Stoppard has yet concocted. More to the point, Shaw's disquisitory dramas don't ask for the kind of emotional response an author can only hope to excite if his characters engage their audience somewhere other than the brainbox. I do not know if Stoppard expects us to wince when we hear that Milne has been killed by unruly troops, but I suspect he does. Alas, the moment passes with a massive shrug – because he is more a set of principles, a series of excited and enthusiastic arguments, than a young man cruelly cut down in his prime.

But this review is beginning to sound like what we old pros call 'knocking copy'; and

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that's not at all its aim. I mean, who can resist a playwright whose word for a nocturnal encounter between a male reporter and his female source is 'debriefing'? Or whose editor's telegraphic reply to shop-floor pressure is 'upstick protest arsewards'? Those who enjoy Stoppard's verbal ingenuity and fun will get their rewards. So will those who relish being stimulated and provoked by a good mind, and, not least, those who lament the lack of decent parts for women in that men's locker-room, the modern theatre. I am not sure that Ruth, who has slept with Wagner and dreams of seducing Milne, slots altogether satisfactorily into the play's scheme: she has, so to speak, an organic connection with the journalists, rather less with the subject of journalism. But her persistent and lonely fantasies, part-pulp, part-desperation, show a benign yet cutting understanding of female sexuality, and one whose accuracy left my companion at the Phoenix last week ruefully astonished. John Thaw, Olu Jacobs and the rest of the males in his cast are more than capable, but Diana Rigg, his Ruth, is perfectly delicious. Never before can her talent for forlorn irony, for doe-eyed self-mockery, have had a better opportunity to prove itself: whatever one's reservations about Stoppard's play as a whole, and his stiff-collared didacticism in particular, he is the one who presented her with it.

Briefly, very briefly, Ronald Draper and Richard Hoggart's *DHL* is an informative but frustratingly hurried and visually null tour through Lawrence's life and work. It should perhaps be a radio documentary or (better still) two or three radio documentaries. And *Rainbow* is a runny-fudge musical from Italy about a modern Noah, one which suggests that God wants to create a new world exclusively populated by people who whirl about in meaningless circles, grinning like idiots and singing extremely silly songs. That sounds to me like heresy.

Sport

Russell Davies

Score Draws

While I was at school, an exam called the Use of English paper was introduced – I think it was a sort of necessary prelude to A-levels. One of the more demanding tests in this verbal obstacle-course was a Deduction from Numerical Information question, where the idea was that articulate conclusions had to be drawn (anomalies pointed out, likelihoods noted, etc) from a stack of statistics. Fortunately, the figures were presented in League Table form, so that those of us who spent our Saturday evenings scanning the Football Pink and absorbing the new look of the four Divisions felt almost at home.

Looking at today's Football League tables, however, I'm not sure we weren't kidding ourselves. The generalisations I would care to utter, working on the basis of present information – with one third of the season gone – are precisely two in number. Namely, that if a

team scores a lot of goals and lets practically none in, it will end up at the top (Example: Liverpool, 39 goals for, 7 against); and that if a team scores hardly any goals but lets a lot in (Lincoln, Div. III, 9 for, 33 against) it can expect to end up as the butt of that old joke, 'Yes, we have a very strong team; it's holding up the whole of the table.' Between these two extremes, statistics can be wildly misleading: it just isn't true that 'what matters is scoring goals'.

It is a fact, for example (I am using the tables published on Monday, 13 November) that Liverpool have scored 21 goals more than Everton, the second-placed team (and have let in one goal fewer). Nottingham Forest, in fourth place, have scored only 6 goals more than the *bottom* club in the division, Birmingham (18 as against 12). Well, you may say, Birmingham must have let a colossal number in. But no; five teams in Div. I have conceded more goals than Birmingham. Two of them, Norwich and Derby, are decidedly mid-table sides. To command 12th place, Norwich have scored 27 goals and conceded 27. Coventry, meanwhile, have scored 19 and let in 19 – for which they are rewarded with *sixth* place. It would seem that it is advisable, on the whole, to be niggardly with both outgoings and incomings; and that one big defeat, such as the seven-goal one Coventry recently suffered, needn't do your position much more than surface damage. Middlesbrough, you see, whose goal average differs from Coventry's by only a single digit (18 goals for, 19 against) are 9 places below them, 15th in the table.

For light relief, let's look for a moment at Div. III, where the heroic Watford team, complete with exhausted Chairman – the King Canute of the hairline – are top in spite of having registered, in 17 games, *no draws at all*. This is a remarkable state of affairs, suggesting to me that Watford must be a highly entertaining do-or-die mob to watch. The team immediately behind them is Shrewsbury, with as many as 8 draws – which just shows with what different styles of riding one can 'jockey for position' at the top of a league. What the Third Division table unequivocally suggests at the moment is that a policy of not losing doesn't work; for Peterborough, who have lost the same number of games as the leaders, are 18th in the table.

The Third Division does boast the draw-champions of the moment: Carlisle, with 10 one-pointers out of 17 games; and in the top division, who should be the leading truce-artists but Nottingham Forest, played 14, drawn 8. It should perhaps be remembered, before the raptures over Forest's 40-game unbeaten run get out of hand, that their goal tally reads 18 for, 9 against. Not riotous, is it? In fact, three of the top six clubs in the division have yet to score 20 goals, after 14 games. So perhaps we should be more thankful than we are for Liverpool, who are still near 3 goals a game, and for West Brom, the only other team averaging over 2. Mind you, the real division for meanies at the moment is Div. II. Led by the notably constipated Stoke (19 for, 12 against), they boast, in mid-table, the three most Scrooge-like clubs of the moment. At the present rate, games involving Leicester, Wrexham and Cambridge United are the least likely to provide you with goals, either way: Wrexham have trafficked 24, Leicester have transacted 25, and Cambridge – what would Bob Wilson say? – have brokered 26, thanks to their 1-3 win over the

leaders last week. This completely out-of-character result, on both sides, has helped to make the division, in effect, a giant mid-table wedge. Luton, in 14th place, deserve credit, I think, for having scored 10 goals more than the team at the top. Luton can only be a comically erratic team who win crushingly when the mood takes them.

At which point I seem to hear the voice of the invigilator barking, 'Candidates will please stop writing!', and I prepare to shuffle out of the exam-room with a rueful grimace and a reeling head. One is pretty sure of having proved nothing, except that figures are cold things, and the smaller the colder. It is icily obvious from the numerical evidence how Forest and Everton are conducting their season; but in Norwich's 27 for, 27 against, there is room for hilarious speculation. It takes all sorts to make a table, in England, thank goodness. It's a long time since I saw the Scottish tables properly set out; those I leave to advanced students with pocket calculators.

Art

John Spurling

Top People

Holbein and the Court of Henry VIII *The Queen's Gallery*
Giovanni Battista Moroni *National Gallery*

Henry VIII's outsize suit of armour, like a former-day Amin, stands in the centre of the Queen's Gallery. Round it, pressed against the walls, are the tyrant's courtiers. The only Holbein portrait of Henry himself in the Royal Collection is contained in a miniature painting of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Reverend signiors are congregated either side of a high canopied throne, servants kneel at the foot with large dishes of edibles, and a procession of women curling up the lower steps leads the eye to the visiting Queen (probably symbolising the Church) in the act of paying homage, with fluid, ingratiating gestures. Latin inscriptions give the gist of her speech: 'Happy are thy men and happy are these thy servants, who stand in thy presence, and hear thy wisdom.' The master himself, Henry dressed as Solomon – seated some eight steps above, arms akimbo, legs wide apart like the suit of armour's, his expression disdainful – is eyeing the food.

If the painting seems to us equivocal, it is no doubt because the only image we regularly expect of our rulers is that of the common touch. Holbein – to judge from the portraits in Rome and Lugano – found Henry remote and frightening. Henry – to judge from Holbein's cartoon for the fresco officially commissioned for the Privy Council Chamber – welcomed that view of himself. Inevitably one looks at this astonishing display of 70 Holbein drawings (plus a few finished oils) as a kind of composite portrait – the reflection of a regime.

Born and trained in Augsburg, Holbein moved to Basel, whence, bearing a letter of introduction from Erasmus to More, he first came to England in 1526. The earliest draw-

ings in this exhibition date from this visit, before the fall of Wolsey and the unlucky rise of More to his place. The sitters include More and his family, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Rochester, an anxious-looking man who was later executed, like More, for refusing to side with Henry in the break with Rome. On his second visit to England, having been driven out of Basel by the violent zeal of the reformers (to whom he was sympathetic, but not, considering that they destroyed many of his own religious pictures, *that* sympathetic), Holbein was taken up by More's chief destroyer, Thomas Cromwell, and given the role of court-painter.

Most of these drawings, then, are of the survivors, and it is not merely fanciful to approach them in the same spirit as Turgenev and Pauline Viardot played their 'Portrait Game' – Turgenev drawing imaginary heads and the guests writing down their assessments of the characters. But there is the added interest here of gauging Holbein's own feelings as he sat taking the likenesses through glass of, say, Sir Richard Southwell and Lord Rich, the Rosencrantz and Guildenstern of More's débâcle, or those good, cultivated friends of More, Sir Thomas and Lady Elyot. After More's execution, Elyot wrote to Cromwell asking him to forget that embarrassing 'amity'. The Elyots appear intelligent, gentle, wary and not very happy. But in this company – nearly all with tight, unsmiling mouths and eyes that look through you or away from you – happiness is not to be looked for. This is a court, one is reminded by the useful biographies in the catalogue, mainly of parvenus: they owe their titles and lands, as well as their official positions, to the suit of armour. 'For Holbein,' Sir John Pope-Hennessy has written, 'the drawing was a considered statement on the personality, from which movement in the sense of play of feature was excluded, and sentiment, if it threatened to be present, was rigorously excised.'

The sentiment we are left with is Holbein's and it emerges with special force from these naked studies of the face, since the rich costumes which would have partly fortified them in the finished paintings are only sketched in and the chief indications that these are top people are the elaborate headgear of the women, the jaunty caps of the men and the universal sense of strain. Holbein remained at the English court until his death in 1543. He too, one must suppose, was content to be the suit of armour's favourite, but no artist ever left a clearer or more subtle record of what that entailed.

Moroni was born in northern Italy at about the time of Holbein's first visit to England. He died in 1578, hence the special exhibition at the National Gallery, which possesses an unrivalled selection of his portraits and has borrowed four more for the occasion. Allan Brahm's admirable and inexpensive (95p.) booklet helps to give substance to this rather obscure figure. Moroni always remained a local artist, setting up shop in Bergamo, the nearest large town to his birthplace. Bergamo belonged to Venice, but it was very close to the border with the Spanish-held province of Milan and was being stoutly fortified during Moroni's residence there. Several of the gentlemen whose portraits hang in this exhibition are shown as soldiers, two of them standing at full length against a background of ruined architecture. The ruins, Brahm suggests, 'are

to be seen in contrast to the courage and endurance of the sitter'. Indeed one gentleman is himself slightly ruined, his armour scattered about the floor and his left foot braced to his upper leg with a black cord. His right hand, however, strays towards his sword-hilt and his long, narrow face watches you closely. The powerful head-and-shoulders portrait of Count Lupi, bears the inscription: 'While Breath Commands These Veins'. Bergamo's seven samurai, one feels, are fully prepared to keep the Spanish out even if the stockade is in bad repair, though their black costumes, crisp white ruffs and whiplash bearing make it plain that they will do so in a thoroughly Spanish fashion.

This frontier spirit extends even to less likely subjects. Moroni's most famous painting (perhaps exchanged for a Spanish suit) is that of a tailor, seen cutting a piece of black cloth. His sallow complexion, quite unlike the healthy pink faces of the other sitters, suggests that his life is spent mostly among the shadows against which he is posed, but although the head is slightly bent forward, his air is the reverse of servile. He too, while breath commands these veins, proposes to make the best suit that money can buy and the only question is whether you are fit to wear it.

Moroni's proud, independent provincials are simple fellows compared to Holbein's tarnished courtiers, but simplicity so boldy and beautifully painted is not to be sneezed at. As the fallen Wolsey said to Cromwell in the play: 'My robe/And my integrity to heaven, is all/I dare now call mine own'. Moroni, his tailor and his well-tailored cavaliers are the very models of that sentiment.

Rock Music

Mark Kidel

Wreckless Eric & Co.

Be Stiff Tour, Plymouth Polytechnic

With Sid Vicious standing accused of murder, and Anthony Burgess once again proclaiming a state of decadence in the *Daily Mail*, the public image of the New Wave has sunk to a New Low. The beasts conjured up by the angry young people of the late Seventies and their media allies seem to have come home to roost. Meanwhile, back on British Rail, the Stiff Tour, a genuine bunch of surprisingly unaffected weirdos, has been cruising round the country on a specially hired train, helping in a small and totally endearing way to offset the worst excesses of the movement. The naughty ambiguity of Stiff's promotional T-shirts may offend the easily offended, but the 1978 Be Stiff revue is safe enough for family entertainment.

Last year, Stiff were selling Elvis Costello, Nick Lowe and Ian Dury. All three have now been 'broken' as money-making propositions, Costello and Lowe having defected with their manager Jake Riviera to a newly formed semi-independent company, Radar. Stiff have

soldiered on, continuing to search for more unconventional talent, in the hope of one day picking up some gold. By the look and sound of the Plymouth show, there may not be another Costello, but it is clear that the company has kept its knack for picking up offbeat talent and making what would look like an unacceptably risky proposition to most executives succeed: Stiff's faith in the bizarre is still paying off.

The gig opened with rock's own Lolita, 16-year-old Rachel Sweet, a sugary red-head from Akron, the home of Middle America's new arty rock. With an aching voice, like a solo Shangri-La, she is both little-girl-lost and siren, begging for fatherly comfort and luring like a dark temptress. Her sweetness is sour enough to avoid being schmaltzy, and with a little more stage practice she may have the makings of a star.

Lene Lovich makes Rachel Sweet look as innocuous as Lena Zavaroni (whatever happened to that pre-teen idol when she hit puberty?). With formidable plaited hair and a semi-oriental head-dress, she stomped around the stage like a caged tigress in season, occasionally grabbing a saxophone to blow a few elementary riffs. Her supporting musicians – like Sweet's – played with great ease and refreshing vitality. By comparison, Jona Lewie, who followed, seemed almost self-effacing. A quiet original, he fitted uneasily into the roguish boisterousness of the evening, and was completely upstaged by the two less than articulate cameos which Lovich contributed to his set.

Micky Jupp, recently re-emerged from semi-obscurity in Southend, gave a more professional performance, belting out a cheery flow of rock'n'roll. He looked a good deal older than the rest of the company, and could well have been Rachel Sweet's wayward rocker of a father; but beyond the creeping middle-aged image there were few signs of clogged-up arteries or flabby muscle: the whole joint was rocking.

Top of the bill was Wreckless Eric, last year's tour junior, and now something of a cult hero. Small, the pock-marked picture of insignificance, he jerked around the place like a happy spastic. Wreckless comes on like a beaten victim of the Welfare State, a dreamer dwarfed by lost battles with officialdom and romantic failures, but wholeheartedly screeching as if with his last breath. The image is an impeccable piece of rock art (he is, not surprisingly, Ian Dury's protégé), but the tone had a predictable monotony.

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Films

John Coleman

Sunt Lacrimae Rerum

Tattooed Tears Scala, 25-26 November, 2-3 December
Sinai Field Mission London Film Festival, 23 November

To be shown at this year's LFF on 23 November (two performances), Nick Broomfield and Joan Churchill's agonising *Tattooed Tears* will subsequently be on club display at the Scala, Tottenham Street: it is not to be missed and the length of its run there will surely be extended if Londoners flock, as one urges them to do, in sufficient numbers. It was the British Mr Broomfield and the American Miss Churchill who made, of course, the staggering *Juvenile Liaison*, which showed well-meaning members of the Lancashire police force damning themselves out of their own mouths, scaring tiny delinquents out of their wits. The furore that followed was stilled by a decidedly hairy blanket of censorship being dropped from a height over the event. The nice thing about the better documentary film makers is not just that they tend to be unusually nice people, anyway a refreshing change from the run-of-the-mill egomaniacs who turn out the bulk of the fictional fodder that passes for nourishment on neighbourhood screens: the nice thing is that they stay undeterred. Broomfield and Churchill would have liked to have taken their questing camera into a high-security Borstal next: it seemed a natural progression. But it was hardly on, as they discovered, after the fuss over *JL*. America, with that peculiar tradition of masochistic openness that confounds the Russians and continues to puzzle me, offered an equivalent. The director of the California Youth Authority, about to resign in reasonable despair over what he couldn't do, authorised their entry into the state's Youth Training School, a prison for 2,000 bad boys between the ages of 17 and 21. They were there for three months.

After a pious rolling prologue, to do with enlightened rehabilitation, a talking head bluntly looks at us: 'They are here for punishment of the crime.' Then noise breaks out, barely to remit, all hell. To shouts and clatter, lads are photographed for mug-shots, assigned their cells, food-trays are brought round. A protracted sequence, deliberately held until one could scream oneself from aural boredom, has a kid protesting about his grub: 'Last time I found a mother-fucking roach in this shit.' He says it again and again; and again and again the meal-man iterates, 'You got your tray': it is a spiritless collision of wills, each waiting for the other to break, a futile ritual. And, as we get to know the four inmates the record settles around, it is these day-in, day-out facts of incarceration that recur: futility, rites.

A black boy, Brian, comes before the annual review board. At first, he seems incoherent, punctuating his protests with 'You

understand me?' *ad nauseam*: then one begins to understand, startlingly. Originally in for three months, he has bucked the system consistently, so that he is now a three-year resident. 'The longer I stay here, the more angry and frustrated I gonna get.' He knows precisely what's up; wants an education; and (as a last title tells) is the one who gets out finally and – unlike the others – stays out. Pout-faced Caspar, in for glue-sniffing, a thick belligerent, wears those tattooed tears, each representing a caged year. When a strip of metal goes missing, he refuses a finger up his rectum and has to be hand and foot-cuffed to submit to a ludicrous X-ray. 'The results were negative,' runs a bland, ironic legend. That could be the name of the film. Caspar was back inside, for car-stealing, two weeks after his release. There is sad, lost Pedro, who hallucinates a woman (his mother?) in the grounds outside and is persuaded by a sweet-meaning lady to come with her and prove there's no one. And there is Ronnie, who slashes his leg after a period in isolation, and is last seen – half-naked – chained to the bars of his cell.

The sensationalism this account might imply has nothing to do with the way *Tattooed Tears* was put together. How can one be so sure of that? Partly, I suppose, because of private knowledge of even harsher material withheld: partly, too, on the evidence of such facilities shown as a fairly sophisticated audio-visual teaching laboratory in action. But there is no question where the weight of the experience lies. Riot squads are caught in training, pursued ruthlessly turning over cells and their occupants: 'Lift your penis, now your balls . . . Spread your cheeks.' An ineffectual analyst crops up. The couple of board meetings filmed, apart from an obviously sincere and unrehearsed offer of a hankie to Brian at the end of his session, are probably blander than they would have been without the presence of camera. The overwhelming sense of this honest look at what society has devised for the young who deviate from its requirements is to do with horror, despair, waste. It asks more questions than it answers. Indeed, it answers none. But questions are what documentary is about.

The great and good Frederick Wiseman, whose extraordinary output has been vainly promoted in these columns before (he is also venerated by Broomfield and Churchill – documentarists tend pleasantly to respect and admire and learn from each other's work), has his latest excursion, *Sinai Field Mission*, in the festival. Having greatly enjoyed his examinations of institutions and enterprises (*High School*, *Law and Order*, *Hospital*, *Basic Training*, my absolute favourite *Essene*, *Juvenile Court*, *Primate*, *Welfare* and *Meat*), and I have deliberately listed them for the *n*th time because I want those who programme our home TV to have the everyday nous to show all of them, I found myself a little adrift with his *Canal Zone* of last year and am even more out of touch with the Sinai film. It is about an American community abroad, a faintly bemused band of do-gooders monitoring the 'buffer zone' between Egypt and Israel, and one suspects it of irony: at least, one would like to. It shows them going about what appear to be largely irrelevant chores and playing protocol to the rusty hilt. 'Bruised egos' are referred to; there are 23 US 'diplomats' and 140 more wayward Texans doing the job; there is a great sequence of fellows filling sandbags in the desert. Maybe my

funny-bone was asleep or something. I don't get it. Or is my revered Mr Wiseman himself in transit, marking time on his way to different artistic terrain?

Television

Ian Hamilton

D.T.'s

Nowadays in American universities it's pretty well taken for granted that if you invite a poet down (or up) to give a reading, he'll get drunk – either before or after the performance or, more than likely, both. It is also widely assumed that the bard in question will behave with grandiose loutishness at one or another of the several parties you'll have organised in his honour. The reading itself will be of secondary interest – poets have a weird gift for sobering up whenever they catch a glimpse of their own work, and there are few recorded instances of major on-stage embarrassments. It's the before and after bits that matter, and here a fairly high level of yahooism is anticipated. Many a visiting poet has had the genuineness of his talent called into question as a result of *not* making a grab for the dean's wife. Sobriety or teetotalism, I need hardly add, are sure signs that the man's a charlatan.

Peter Porter

The God of Philosophers

(1) Pico

If we could see into the mind of God we should discover a world of books where a sophisticated love vainly seeks unlettered truth. What made the light is conquered by light. The cost of Incarnation is in the small print.

(2) Pascal

The trivial at heart is the sublime. The world runs down and calls the process time. Mark how God's love lingers in the rhyme.

(3) Kierkegaard

We must sin and not enjoy it, then God will punish us and we'll be happy. I quote from a NEW STATESMAN competition. (Acknowledgments, if copyright.) These are the nettles we are cast in. The bush is evergreen.

(4) Nietzsche

Whatever we have words for we have outgrown. Nothing, however, is as garrulous as renunciation. We Germans should leave the Industrial Revolution to God and the Anglo-Saxons.

Some of these assumptions are no doubt inherited from the Dylan Thomas tours of the early 1950s – and if so perhaps constitute Thomas's most valuable legacy. But when Thomas was doing his stuff, the academic/literary milieu in America was vastly different from today's – the prevailing temper was rationalistic, exegetical, didactic. None of the post-war Soho bohemianism on which Thomas thrived had yet slopped over the Atlantic; and if it had – since Eliot was the reigning deity – it would have been treated with disdain. What was prized, though, was density, knottiness in verse, and here Thomas's obscure works had an immediate appeal to the associate professors: high-grade seminar material. Hence the constant invitations, the half-offers of university appointments, the expectation that Thomas would – when he came – co-operate in the dismantling of his mysterious machines. Hence, too, the shock when he actually arrived. This was a period when literary criticism was close to becoming another branch of science, and Thomas in the flesh turned out to be the lurching, dribbling embodiment of what it most feared and despised: neo-romantic unruliness; the vapid, the religiose, the essentially unteachable. Little wonder that Thomas warmed to his labours as he shuttled from one aghast English department to the next; little wonder that he kept on needing one more on top of that one more for the road.

Still, as I've said, he blazed a trail for which many hundreds of thirsty and vain poets have since had reason to be grateful, and thus well deserves the various anniversary tributes of the last few days. The television effort, *Dylan* (BBC-2), was a 'drama-documentary' by Paul Ferris, the author of an admirably sceptical biography of Thomas, and focused on the poet's final US tour and – far too lavishly – on his dealings with one of his sundry American girl-fans. In life, there is little evidence that this particular friendship mattered all that much to Thomas: Liz Reitell was a welcome prop, someone he could get to do things for him, someone at whom he could mumble his self-pitying soliloquies, but – apart from, as it were, being in at the kill – hardly a key heroine. A death story was presumably thought to need a love story, however, so there she was – played by Gayle Hunnicutt as if she herself suspected she was being just a shade presumptuous.

Romance aside, there was a stagey self-consciousness in the handling of Thomas's party-atrocities, and of his actual readings. Edward Lacey's impersonation of D.T. was superb but the script didn't make it easy for him to project Thomas as other than a posturing wreck – the emphasis was too eagerly on the spectacular throughout. Maybe Ferris simply knew so many conflicting accounts of Thomas's last days that he had to take refuge in vivid caricature, but some of the more cumbersome exchanges pointed rather to indolence and haste: 'Where is he?'; 'He's exhausted'; 'He's no right to be exhausted. This university has paid him \$250.' Or perhaps, in 1953, professors really talked that way.

Edward and Mrs Simpson (LWT) has not yet reached the spectacular bits, and this calm-before-the-storm first episode was mainly spent establishing how much – how many acres, castles, servants, how much grovelling and grandeur – the Prince will stand to lose. It also reminds us of his lofty sense of

duty – 'All those ghastly government sahibs to cope with, poor darling. You've certainly done your bit to hold the Empire together'; 'It's my job' – and of his budding social conscience: this deftly illustrated by way of a train-trip to the Welsh coalmines.

Also established is the number and quality of rival mistresses who will have to be elbowed aside by Mrs Simpson: all of these, it should be said, a good deal more appealing than the scheming Wallis. Indeed, it is altogether hard to imagine at this stage the offhandedly authoritative Edward Fox being got to by a hussy of her calibre. An impressive introduction – painstakingly good-looking on the sets-and-costumes front, and convincing too about the Royal's eerie isolation not just from 'ordinary people' but also from the heavily insulated set he hangs about with.

The mediocrity of BBC-1's *Royal Variety Performance* (an almost insulting line-up this year of past-its and non-starters) will perhaps have done wonders for the ratings of Robert Robinson's *Word for Word* (BBC-2) but I'd have thought that most newcomers would have been mildly baffled by the programme's effortfully cryptic style. Minutes spent on giv-

ing the answers (wrong or right) to a quiz without telling us what the original questions were; mountainously turgid interviews with authors about new books without more than a contemptuous word or two of descriptive introduction; an altogether puzzling sequence in which Robert Robinson seemed to be back at his old school having a sing-song with the teachers; an essay (this had the appearance of being genuinely unsolicited) by George Melly on how jazz lingo is different now to what it used to be, and so on. Admittedly, it's correct in culture-shows to be sprightly but non-patronising. This, though, was positively secretive. Billed as a programme about 'language', *Word for Word* seems at the moment a catch-all for floating literary bits-and-pieces, and its snappy chapter-heading shifts from topic to topic – though these pretend to busy informality – in fact provide a way of avoiding having to explain, or even casually imply, what R.R. really thinks he's doing. And why is this competent broadcaster saddled with a Girl Friday who finds it hard to separate one word from another, and who believes that, whatever's being dished up to us, a grin will help us bear it?

Weekend Competition

No 2541

Set by Spiro Keats

This is the big one: a festive comp, powerfully endowed by our generous sponsors. Several bottles – it all depends on how many I choose to keep for myself – of Bisquit Cognac are riding on 2541, so get weaving. Clerihews, please, in which the key rhyme word is the name of a high-octane beverage, specific or non-specific (gin, Chateaufort du Pape, cider, Bull's Blood, etc). Max three entries per person, by 1 December. Cheers!

Result of No 2538

Set by Dan Drough

Competitors were asked to rewrite Enobarbus's 'The barge she sat in...' in the style of Peter Porter, Roy Fuller or Craig Raine.

Report

By Little Keith

A skilful and entertaining response to this attractive comp. He was very pleased with you all and told us to give you £7 each – for the two Porters, the two Fullers and the two Raines. Large quantities of Bisquit Cognac have already begun to arrive. Chaos in the Complex carpark as the sponsor's trucks shudder and honk; crates of the warming elixir ferried into the scenic elevator; a long and silent tasting session up in the Complex penthouse – Spiro à un, alas. I must say he's been in a very sunny mood recently. We just hope there'll be some left for you. The incredibly witty titles are mine, by the way, for which I get lots of money.

Bitten Again

There goes her barge without me. Did she spot Me lurking in the reeds as she swept by? Ra only knows. What gets her I've not got. No ranks below Triumvir need apply.

I'm just a scribe in plastic sandals. She Squats on a golden throne, I on this log. How does it feel to screw a dynasty? Caesar found out, but he was not a wog.

And now it's Antony that fuels her fires. The lucky bastard lies in wait down-Nile. Some Keystone Copts are shouting. It transpires I'm sitting on a sacred crocodile.

CLIVE JAMES

The Last of Egypt

I saw the love-plagued soldier lose his taste
For spaghetti and Verdi – a Telemachus
Sans sword – forget the serried legions
Without a word to G.H.Q.; for her: neon-lit and
octoroon,
Her trim bum nestling in lurex in the V.I.P.
lounge.

Congruous, the polythene music throbbed.
From the palsied river arias of stink wafted.
Sunken-bellied sailors were impaled on their oars
And drowned (I put the mandragora to one side).
That pretty, pretty smell –
Chanel, is it? – limped in on a cavatina of halitus.

The water learned respect (rebellion can be so
Inconvenient) beneath her tawdry launch
Where gimcrack grovels to amplify, fortissimo.
And what of her, you eyeball-boggling imperialists
object –
Can you know the woman from her effects?

Clouded by nancy-boys admiring her legendary
tits
(Bigger than Bardot's), come fresh-faced
From the cafeteria, who flick beer mats
disconcertingly
In her face, she shows a royal flush. Vulpine
tongues
Flop out stiff. Breath comes heavy. She blows hot
and cold.
MARTIN REED

The Petty Officer's Mess

Cleo's barge burn'd on the water,
(Burn'd, of course, in single quotes),
Though it's not the first or last time
That the lady burnt her boats.

Cleo beggar'd all description,

Shakespeare's adjectives ran out,
Even his reserves of word-power
Hadn't got sufficient clout.

Silver oars and flutes and perfume,
Everything in lavish style,
On her royal purple passage
She sold Egypt down the Nile.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Tony Tears

Hotly drawing lethal tides
Through the vapoured scent she rides,
Gold-emblazoned barge among
Perfumed sails and fluted song,
Dwarfing even that remote
Mythic Venus long begot.
Music strokes the argent sweeps,
Rounded cherub-sentry keeps
Fanning cheeks to love aflame
Where intention was to tame.

GERRY HAMILL

The Peach Melba, Memory

Her barge slips up the river Cydnus
like Brylcreem up a quiff, its distant oars

like tiny silver teaspoons, smoothing the polished
tide aside
like a zip hitched carefully upwards

By a girl with skin-tight thighs. The water burns,
lighter fluid lit in a silver chalice

or paraffin twinkling in the left eye of
the fire-eater
Her perfumes are expensive deodorant,

lulling the yoghurt-cheeked musicians,
whose flutes
are glued like glossy lipstick to mouths

attempting impossible kisses. Her boys clutch fans,
wafers wedged here and there in her outsize
peach melba.

There she lies, her cheeks coloured the vin rosé
of a five-year-old's recently spanked buttocks.

Above her tent of papal altar-cloth, the purple
sails
swell out and in like Dizzy Gillespie's cheeks.

BILL GREENWELL

Beware the Vibes of Mark
Let me tell you how it was. Think of it
as something else. Then you'll get the picture.

Her golden barge came towards us
like a throne on heat, burning for attention.

The winds wrapped it round their little fingers.
The sails pretended they were queer Moby Grape.

The oars grew attached to the river
And cried every time it went away.

Then the air came over hot and dizzy.
It had to go on leave of absence.

A hive of activity buzzed on the water.
She was a Queen Bee holding court.

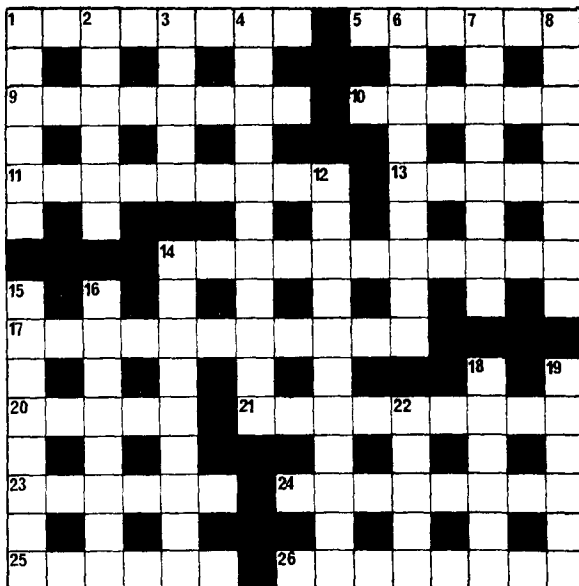
She feeds the appetite for simile, metaphor,
but leaves you hungry for more, more.

SIDNEY GIDNEY

CHESS: *Tony Miles is on holiday.*

Weekend Crossword 1283

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1283, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 28 November.



ACROSS

- Dogs make a quarrel during the service (8).
- Afforded sunburnt colour at holiday resort (6).
- Divisions or smaller parts of army (8).
- Prayer of malefactor is only hope (6).
- Queer man adored woman (9).
- Break out from the water up to the surface (5).
- In reconstruction everything else comes before the speech (11).
- Search a single country for a group (11).
- Singer holds one as first principle (5).
- Deaf person who has real pride (9).
- The bird comes after a note has been returned giving excuses (6).
- Little farm behind a tree would do for Peggy (8).
- One who follows the bank (6).

- In the desert where oil and dates are found (8).

DOWN

- Accident at high point on motorway (6).
- Give way a point after one of the better players gets about a hundred (6).
- I enter as a name (5).
- This covers the wound, so one can have an accident without the need for resting (11).
- China in place or out of order (9).
- Monk who converts puritans (8).
- Presenting a kind of play out of order in chronology (8).
- Breaking off in the middle of a sentence (11).
- Bring fresh enthusiasm with the top under control (9).
- Mark on a poet where a sword is to be found (8).
- Make notes about the food being excellent (8).

- Dexterous when the priest I ordained holds it back (6).
- Talked foolishly and has to depart in confusion (6).
- 'Let such teach others who themselves —' (Pope) (5).

SET SQUARE

Solution to No 1281

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Qualifications

Candidates should be experienced in financial administration, able to work up to trial balance and to correspond effectively and concisely.

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The starting salary will be £3,297 per annum at 25 or over, rising by annual increments to a maximum of £4,579 per annum, plus an Inner London Weighting Allowance of £465 per annum.

Please write for application form and further details, enclosing a large self-addressed envelope marked "EO Finance" to The Commission for Racial Equality, 10/12 Allington Street, London SW1E 5EH. Please note that completed application forms must be returned to the CRE to reach them by 1 December 1978.

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SALARY: Local Government, AP3.

FURTHER DETAILS:

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Telephone Harlow 26662 ext 25.

Closing date 8 December 1978.

HARLOW

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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON (Gower St, WC1E 6BT). The Townsend Memorial Lecture by Mr Andrew Forge, 'Transatlantic Reflections — some remarks on Art in England'. Wednesday 22 November at 5.30. Admission free. Without ticket.

SHAW SOCIETY, Friday 24 November. T. G. Evans on 'Shaw and the Intelligent Woman at Conway Hall, WC1. Coffee 6.30, lecture 7 p.m.

'INTERVENTION to protect minorities' — Minority Rights Group Annual Lecture by Prof. James Fawcett, President of European Human Rights Commission, 6.30 on 29 November at 10 St James's Sq, SW1.

'CRUELTY TO ANIMALS' talk by Bryan Gunn of the Anti-Vivisection Society, London. Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terr., W8. 7.30 p.m. Sun. 19 Nov. Adm. 30p.

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